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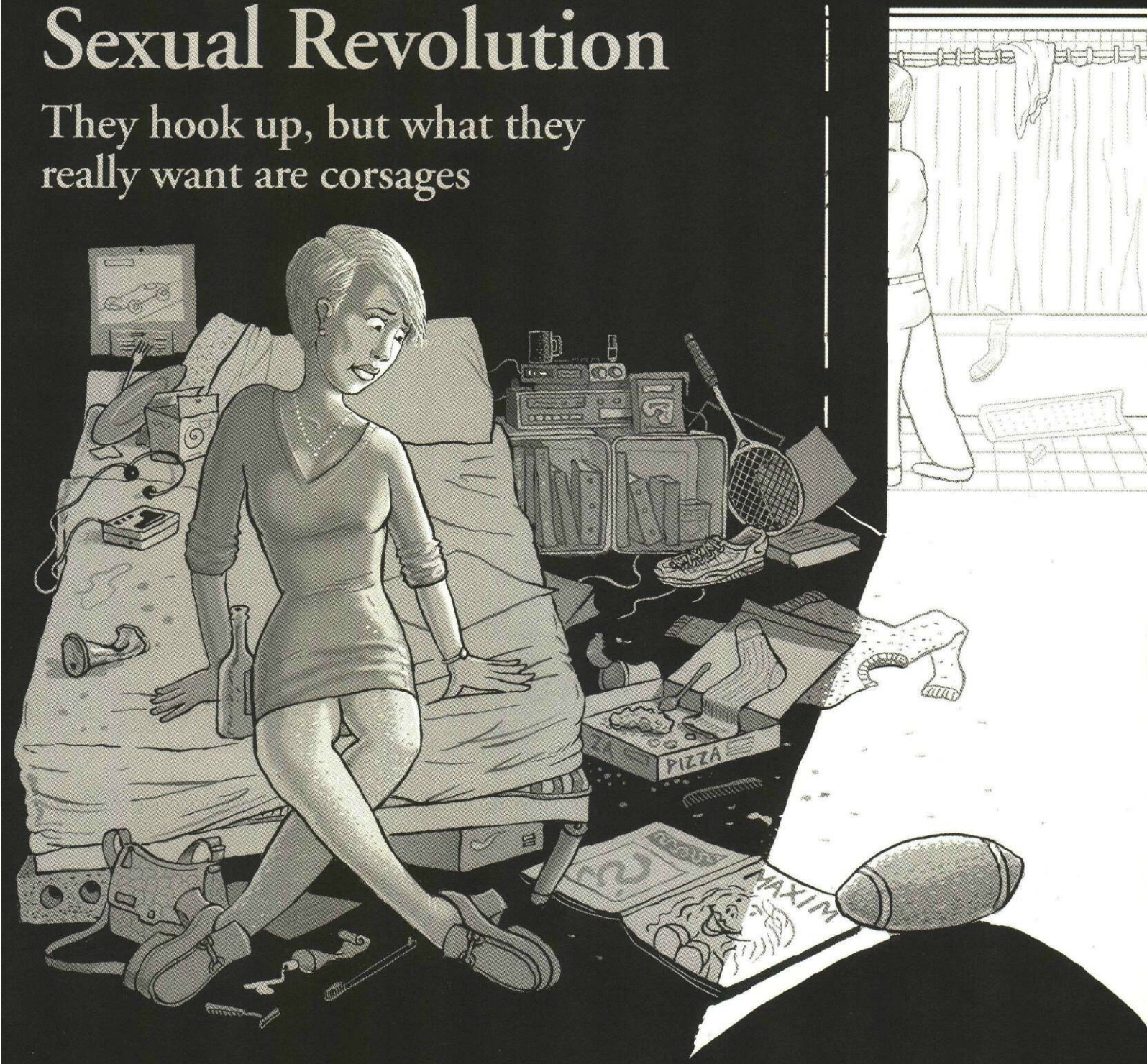
The Women's Quarterly

Daughters of the Sexual Revolution

They hook up, but what they really want are corsages



Getting Serious with Joan Rivers & *Manhandling Madeleine*

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Diary

My Kind of First Lady

A RECENT ARTICLE IN the *Washington Post*'s "Style" section reports that back home my fellow Mississippians "feel ridiculed again" because of the marital antics of Gov. Kirk Fordice and his feisty wife Pat.

The sixty-five-year-old governor, it seems, never really got over his high school sweetheart, Ann G. Creson of Memphis. Now the governor wants to end his forty-four-year marriage to Pat Fordice, grandmother of eleven and a garden club stalwart with an interest in French art, so that he and the Widow Creson can spend their golden years together. But Fordice can't dislodge his steel magnolia of a wife from the governor's mansion.

Far from "feeling ridiculed again," I am pleased as punch to hail from the state that is home to such a paragon of female virtue as the formidable Pat Fordice. As I perused the newspaper in my Washington, D.C., apartment, so far from home, it occurred to me that Pat Fordice is the Anti-Hillary.

She is not without tough-minded precedents nearer the Mason-Dixon Line. When Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland became involved with a woman who lived on Route 301—earning that thoroughfare the moniker "The Road to Mandalay"—in the seventies, his wife, Bootsie Mandel, refused to vacate the governor's mansion. She remained firmly ensconced, while the governor moved to a motel.

Pat Fordice had known that her husband was fooling around. Indeed, the aging Romeo publicly declared his undying love for the Widow Creson as early as 1993. But Mrs. Fordice made it clear that divorce was out of the question. The romance went irrevocably public, however, last June, when the amorous couple, returning from a trip to Paris, were photographed together in the Atlanta airport.

Pat was ready to show the world how a real woman—and a true southern lady—reacts to a lousy two-timer who publicly humiliates her. When the governor, a Republican who has perhaps ill-advisedly criticized Bill Clinton's sexual conduct, put out a statement that his marriage had broken down, Pat refused to join him in making the announcement.

"She was afraid that, if she did so, it would send the wrong message, *i.e.*, that she has condoned or forgiven her husband's conduct," a statement issued by her lawyer helpfully explained. According to the statement, "Mrs. Fordice feels that she has been caught up in a whirlwind of controversy which she had hoped to avoid for the sake of her children and for the sake of the people of this state, and that it is not fair for Gov. Fordice to call upon her to calm the storms by making or adopting public announcements which turn contrary to her true feelings."

The Mississippi First Lady's attorney concluded, somewhat menacingly: "Mrs. Fordice has not sought out a podium or a public forum to condemn her husband, and she is still hopeful that she will not be put in that position, but only time and his actions—not his words—will tell."

Shortly afterwards, Gov. Fordice decided to take his black Lab, Lance—what is it with straying husbands and their Labs?—for a walk in downtown Jackson, Miss. For the occasion, the governor dressed in shorts and strapped on a holster containing a gun. "If Mrs. Fordice is as upset as they say, maybe that's the reason [for the gun]," someone suggested.

Pat has me bursting with pride. The First Lady of Mississippi has boldly hit upon what might be termed a Republican approach to the problem of sin: Blame the sinner. Unlike the First Lady of Mississippi, the First Lady of the land has blamed her husband's plight on everybody from the "vast right wing conspiracy" to the President's poor old granny, who isn't around to defend herself. "He was so young, barely four, when he was scarred by abuse that he can't even take it out and look at it. There was terrible conflict between his mother and grandmother," Hillary tells Lucinda Franks of *Talk* magazine. "A psychologist once told me that for a boy being in the middle of a conflict between two women is the worst possible situation."

Donning her theologian's cap, Hillary further confides to Franks that "in Christian theology there are sins of weakness and sins of malice," indicating that her husband's caper with Monica Lewinsky falls into the lesser category.

When Pat finally was moved to issue an apology—of sorts—it was not designed to mitigate her husband's guilt: "Pat apologizes to the people of this state for being a partner in a marriage that has become a source of embarrassment for Mississippi," it said.

I sympathize with Pat Fordice, but I don't pity her. While you try to sympathize with Mrs. Clinton, who can help but pity her? She may ride a tidal wave of pity into the U.S. Senate. But Pat Fordice has her dignity. Maybe she should run for office.

~Charlotte Hays

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The Women's Quarterly

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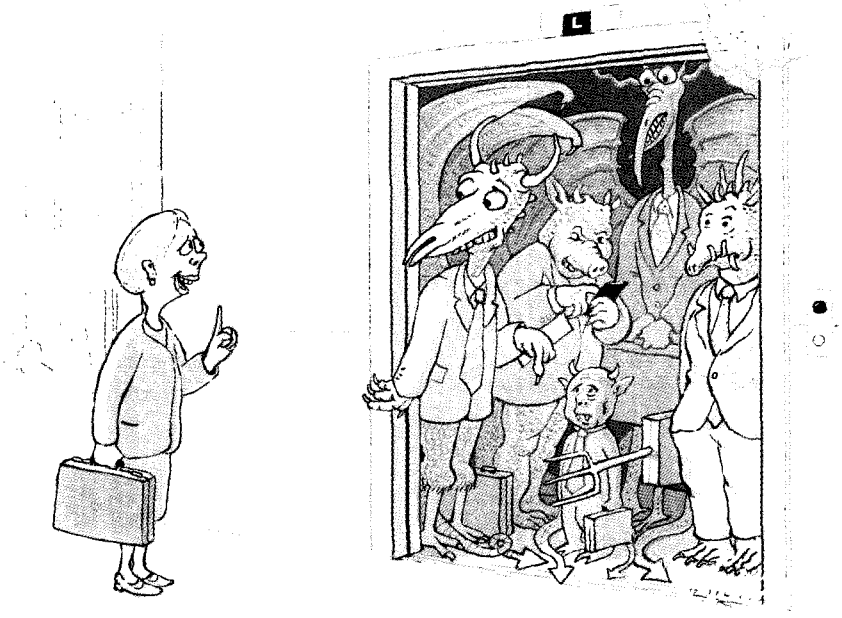

"Er... Up!... Thank you!"

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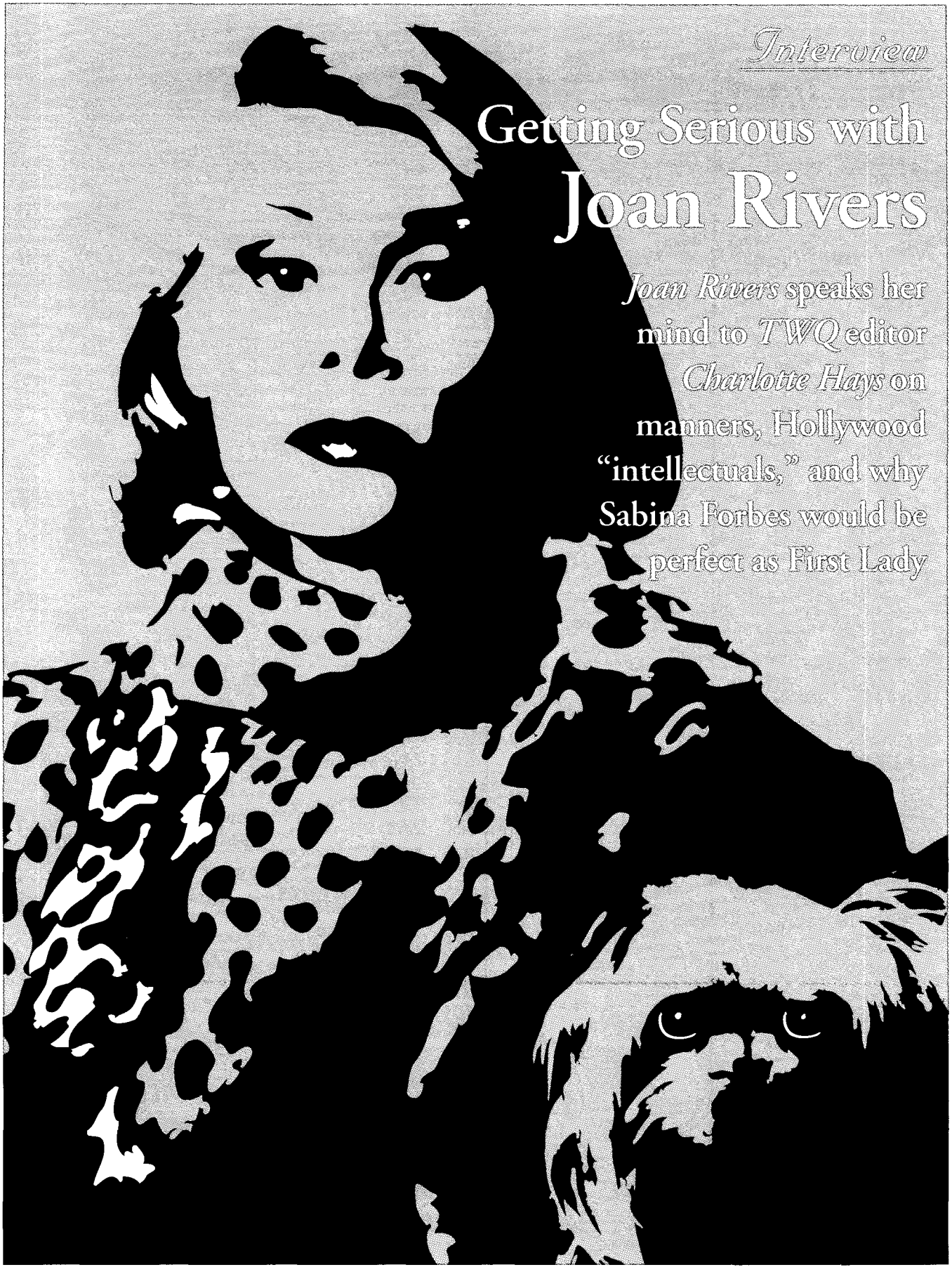
Interview

Getting Serious with Joan Rivers

Joan Rivers speaks her mind to *TWQ* editor *Charlotte Hays* on manners, Hollywood "intellectuals," and why Sabina Forbes would be perfect as First Lady



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TWQ: You are famous because of your very funny—well, very *wicked*—mouth. But your acquaintances know that you are a person of incredible decorum and civility. What gives?

RIVERS: What I do on stage is a whole different thing. It makes fun of all the horrors that we all go through. But it's tough to get through life, and the prettier you can make yours the better it will be, and that's all part of dressing up and it's all part of living with little rituals and not eating over the sink. Decorum adds grace to life.

TWQ: What convinced you that decorum is so important?

RIVERS: Well, I think that comes from my mother. So much comes from my mother. My mother was extremely kind and extremely sensitive to other people, and she always seemed to know just the right thing to say to put whomever she was talking to at ease. That's a major gift. My aunt is another role model who, whether she had a lot of money—which she did at different times in her life—or when she was between husbands, always had those sterling silver bread-and-butter plates on the table. Even though every corner in her Park Avenue apartment was rented out, we sat down with finger bowls and service trays, and she just said, "That's it. That's the way I live."

TWQ: So *that's* why you use finger bowls?

RIVERS: Yes, and also just because it's wonderful to do so. Because it makes a dinner party a little special. Because it makes you stop and realize dinner is more than gobbling. Dinner is something very pleasant and lovely and a time to be enjoyed with friends.

TWQ: Are there times when it's okay and, indeed, right to be rude to someone?

RIVERS: I don't think so. I don't think I've ever been. You walk away or you can be a little cold, but total rudeness, especially in someone's house, *never.*

TWQ: Should men open doors for women in our egalitarian age?

RIVERS: Yes. And a gentleman should stand up when you enter the room and make you remember that you are a lady. I don't understand why some women want to be *strong as a man.* I find that ridiculous. I never wanted to be a bellhop.

TWQ: Some would consider the word "lady" anachronistic. What is a lady?

RIVERS: A lady is a woman who has grace under fire. She has charm, kindness, generosity of spirit and—again—manners. She always remembers her manners. If you ask me who a lady is, I'd say [fashion designer] Carolina Herrera is a lady. When I think of the women I know, [New York philanthropist] Carroll Petrie certainly comes under that category. In the younger group, I think of [New York socialite] Blaine Trump. Her kindness and generosity are amazing. She works very, very hard for God's Love We Deliver, which provides special meals to AIDS patients.

TWQ: What are some of your charitable activities?

RIVERS: I work with Blaine for God's Love. We send out more than 2,000 meals a day and many people have special dietary needs. I love to go out and deliver meals on Christmas and Thanksgiving day before I sit down to my own dinner. Unfortunately, when AIDS came along, we forgot about a lot of other things that still need our help. I've helped with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and I work very hard for Guide Dogs for the Blind. It's a very unchic charity—one of the unsung charities—but what it does is so important. Like so much in my life, this goes back to my mother. She had very bad eyesight towards the end of her life, and so I know how much this can mean.

TWQ: In your book, *Bouncing Back,* you claim you hold a Ph.D. in I.B.T.I.A—I've Been Through It All. That includes your husband's suicide, and being, as you describe it, "a nice Jewish girl with the national debt of Nicaragua" after the bankruptcy of Joan Rivers Productions. And, on top of it all, a devastating period of unemployment. But you always came back stronger. Which is more important in overcoming adversity—decorum or wit?

RIVERS: In getting through life? Wit! Wit! We're so lucky to have wit. Only man has it. Animals don't have humor. We're so lucky it's given to us, and it gets you through everything. Never be angry when you go to a funeral and somebody is laughing. That's God giving you a Band-Aid. Humor heals. Humor is the one thing that makes every organ of the human body respond positively. Humor is a sip of water to a parched throat.

TWQ: To change the subject a bit, we live in a world where kids—and adults!—dress like slobs. Mayor Rudy Giuliani operates on the broken-windows theory: You clean up the broken windows and the crime rate falls. Could the same idea be applied to dress—dress better and people will behave better?

RIVERS: Absolutely! A friend of mine started a school in Harlem for kids from really poor, broken families. It's for girls only and they have to wear uniforms. It's amazing how discipline follows from proper dress. Giuliani is right. I think the way we allow people to dress is totally wrong. Dressing sloppily shows a lack of self-discipline. It's a lack of respect for yourself and

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the people you're dealing with. You find that all over and it's sad.

TWQ: Are parents partly to blame? We recognize that it's the responsibility of parents not to let kids build bombs in the basement, but what about dress? Should they take a more active role?

RIVERS: I think you have to. I know my mother did. There were arguments. There were certain times when I had to wear what my mother wanted me to wear, like it or not. All your life you're going to come up against rules and regulations, and it starts in childhood with dress. Looking back, even though we hated it, you say, "I'm so glad I wore Mary Janes to parties."

TWQ: Getting children to dress properly can be difficult. What about with your daughter, Melissa? How did you handle the issue of dress?

RIVERS: I always told Melissa that she had to have good manners and look nice in case Queen Elizabeth showed up. When she was about six, she looked up from the dinner table and said, "But you don't know Queen Elizabeth." Laurence Olivier did come to dinner, though, and—to a lot of sobs—I insisted that Melissa dress up to meet him. We had a dress code, and Melissa observed it. It was not a big tragedy for her.

TWQ: I can't interview a celebrated gossip without asking if you have rules about gossip. What's good gossip? What's bad gossip?

RIVERS: Oh, you shouldn't decide what's bad gossip. Tell me *everything* and I'll decide. Seriously, malicious gossip that you know isn't true is very bad. Gossip that can hurt a relationship is very bad. It's a sin in the Jewish religion to break a couple up. So, I'm very careful of that kind of gossip. But I love a good story. I hope that every great looking woman I meet is a former Madame Claude girl.

TWQ: Bill Clinton. Too much or too little gossip about him?

RIVERS: Never too much gossip about him! Never too much! What fun it's been this last year. Really what great fun! It kept everybody so amused. I have a radio show, and it gave me hours and hours and hours of jokes. God bless him.

TWQ: You mentioned religion. Do you practice a religion?

RIVERS: I'm Jewish, and I practice it to the extent that I observe the high holidays. I love the ritual. As long as I can remember, there were certain days when I'd dress up and go to temple. Of course, as a kid, I hated it. But I believe in God, and I believe the Jewish religion is so ethical. When I finally started reading up about it, I kept thinking, "Yeah, that's right."

TWQ: You live in a world of celebrities where it's simply taken for granted that everybody is a staunch Democrat. Yet, you are working for Steve Forbes. What are your politics?

RIVERS: As the saying goes, the first half of your life if you're not a Democrat, it's wrong because you should be an idealist, and the second half of your life, if you are a Democrat, it's wrong because you should use your head. If you've worked hard enough to acquire something, you don't want the bastards to take it from you. So, I am very much a conservative. I believe in order and law. I believe in people working and getting to keep something for their hard work. I believe that no one should automatically feel that this country "owes" them something. People in our business are such bleeding hearts. It's ironic because they worked hard to get where they are. I think it's all about feeling guilty over their success.

TWQ: Do Democrats and glamour go hand in hand?

RIVERS: I just think that people are very easily seduced. The Democrats have the lock on this great seduction of "come sleep over in the Lincoln Bedroom." Republicans are not as interested in glamour and not as interested in Hollywood and the moral codes that Hollywood represents.

TWQ: And yet you belong to this world. . . .

RIVERS: No, I don't. I'm very much the outsider when I go to Los Angeles. They can't believe it. They keep sending me all these pamphlets, and they're in shock when I call back and say, "I don't believe in this. Thank you very much, but NO." I'm against the ACLU. It had its reason and had its day, but now it's almost a subversive organization. Up to a point we all believe in freedom of speech, but let's not get crazy. If you've broken our laws, you've forfeited your rights to other freedoms our country provides. When you break your covenant with society, society breaks its covenant back with you. I think the ACLU is ridiculous and insane to defend the Ku Klux Klan's right to freedom of speech.

TWQ: Another interesting thing about Hollywood is that it used to think of itself as show biz. Now people in show biz think of themselves as intellectuals. We're treated—with a straight face—to the deep thoughts of Sharon Stone. What happened to Hollywood?

RIVERS: I don't know what happened to Hollywood. But before you think of yourself as an intellectual, buy a house with at least one bookshelf.

TWQ: Who are some politicians you like?

RIVERS: I stumped for Reagan. What style they brought to the White House! And they never embarrassed

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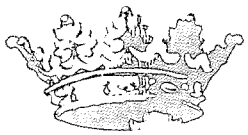
us. We were proud to have him as our president. On a local scale, I admire Giuliani because he just doesn't give a damn. I love his dedication and his not bending to special interest groups. Why aren't people standing up and cheering for this man? It also makes me very sad that people aren't getting Steve Forbes the way they should. They say, "Oh, he's spending his own money." Don't they understand how wonderful that is? It means he's beholden to no one. I think Steve Forbes' flat tax is brilliant, so brilliant nobody wants to give it a chance. It does seem the fairest and most sensible system. Today, if you're very, very clever and you have very intelligent and clever attorneys, you can get away with murder. The very rich are getting away with murder, and the poor middle class is getting screwed. We're killing the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is what makes this country and every other country work. It's the middle class that made this country. I hope to hell the American public will wake up and see what Steve Forbes can do. Maybe he has to take off his glasses and let down his hair.

TWQ: What kind of First Lady would Steve Forbes' wife, Sabina Forbes, make?

RIVERS: The best. This is a woman who breeds cattle in New Jersey. This is a woman who raised five children. Cooked, cleaned. Sabina is so smart and so down to earth and so realistic.

TWQ: What kind of New York senator would Hillary Clinton make, assuming she hasn't folded by the time this comes out?

RIVERS: I don't think she's going to fold. I think she's going to make it. And, it depresses me very much. I can't believe anything [the Clintons] tell me. They are such opportunists and liars. On my radio show, people call and say, "She's done so much." And I'll ask, "What?" They'll reply, "Well, she's done so much for women." Then I'll say, "Give me an example." They can't come up with a single example. But it doesn't matter: The myth is that she has done a great deal for women. Right now she's going through New York, not on a normal pre-election circuit tour, but on a listening tour. [Laughter.] Whoever came up with that term was brilliant. It's so hypocritical and calculated. I wish people would look at what New York City was before Rudy Giuliani was elected mayor and what New York City is now. He could do the same thing for the state as senator.



I always told Melissa she had to look nice in case Queen Elizabeth showed up. She said, "But you don't know Queen Elizabeth."

TWQ: Let's talk about your new book, *Don't Count the Candles: Just Keep the Fire Lit.* You quote a marvelous remark by Lady Astor: "I refuse to admit that I'm more than fifty-two, even if it does make my sons illegitimate." Should a lady tell her age? Even be asked her age?

RIVERS: A lady should never be asked her age. God bless the French with their "lady of a certain age" expression. Unfortunately, age is everything now: "Joan Rivers, seventy-nine or whatever, was talking to Merle Oberon's ghost, 107." Everything is youth now.

TWQ: But in the book you're really proposing ways to age gracefully and offering an alternative to the obsession with youth, aren't you?

RIVERS: I'm just saying screw 'em. Forget your age. Just stare them down. If somebody asks you your age, tell them forty-one and stare them down. It's also very important to stay in the arena and not get left behind. You must get on the Internet. You must know what people are talking about. You have to know what rap is. You don't have to like Puff Daddy, but *listen* to him before you make up your mind. Nobody cares about Ike and Mamie. Go to Broadway plays. Go to art galleries and museum openings.

TWQ: What about people who don't live in a city where this is possible?

RIVERS: But it is possible. The Internet brings you the world. I repeat: You must get on the Internet! Whenever I hear someone proudly say, "I don't have a computer, a fax or a VCR," I want to say, "Elvis is dead, and you'd better check your pulse too." And movies—you should see whatever the top movie is. Get two bestsellers. Read a newspaper. Anyone who doesn't read a newspaper every day is out of the loop. It's very important not to get left behind when the world is moving so fast! And women today are amazing. We're exercising and eating nutritiously. A woman of fifty isn't old today. Truly, she isn't old. She looks thirty-five or forty and is able to feel great and do anything. We're given longer spans of life in which we are viable.

TWQ: And you've been very frank about one reason you look so great. The dedication in *Don't Count the*

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Candles reads: "To all the innovative plastic surgeons of tomorrow: Hurry!!!" Some people regard plastic surgery as something that's somehow slightly wrong.

RIVERS: God gave us plastic surgeons. Next! [Laughter.] Only the naturally beautiful say plastic surgery is bad. There's even a new anti-wrinkle treatment called Botox that injects weakened botulism—which at full strength is a deadly poison—into facial muscles and thus smoothes out the skin. I've had it done and it's great. True, it's a voluntary muscle paralysis from a poisoned Fountain of Youth. If the needle hits the wrong muscle, I can't close my eyes. Oh, well. I'd only be awake for six months because then the treatment wears off, and beauty demands fresh paralysis.

TWQ: Do you have to be rich to dress well and age well?

RIVERS: No, you don't have to be rich—you have to be smart. One of the best-dressed women I know, my own dresser, in fact, buys half her clothes at K-Mart—simple blazers, slacks, skirts, sweater sets—and she looks great in them. Of course, she works hard to keep herself in shape. All women should—you don't want to end up buying your outfits not at K-Mart but at Home Depot. Some of the biggest fools when it comes to dress are the rich. Imagine spending thousands of dollars to look ridiculous in an Yves St. Laurent miniskirt microknit when you're seventy!

TWQ: What are your guidelines for aging appropriately? In the book, you have a hilarious scene where guys are giving wolf whistles from behind to a gal in a short dress "wiggling her tight little tush and looking hot." She turns around and they see her face and exclaim, "Oh, my God, it's Margot from Shangri-La!" How do women keep from making fools of themselves?

RIVERS: It's very hard, isn't it? It's very hard to say, "I can't wear that anymore." You walk past a store and say, "Wow! Isn't that great?" And then you realize, "Not anymore." And you just have to be very strict with yourself. It's tough. Tough. Tough. Tough. I look at my daughter, whose gorgeous, silky hair cascades down to her shoulders. She wants to cut it off. At my age, if I had long hair, I'd look like Miss Havisham from *Great Expectations.* You simply must accept the fact that long, long hair is now for your daughter, your son, or your dog.

TWQ: One can't interview Joan Rivers without asking about jewelry. What about jewelry?

RIVERS: I have been in the jewelry business for nine years, and I totally believe that wearing at least one piece of jewelry makes a woman look finished. The important thing is to keep your jewelry simple and appropriate. If you're over thirty-five, a nose ring is not a good idea, unless you're planning to move to Borneo. Just one pretty, artfully placed pin can pull a whole outfit together. It can, of course, be imitation as long as you are real, as long as you know who you are and are happy with your identity.

TWQ: You compare two women turning fifty in *Don't Count the Candles.* Farrah Fawcett, on turning fifty, says, "So this is what thirty looks like." Gloria Steinem says, "So this is what fifty looks like."

RIVERS: I think Gloria said that before her facelift. [Laughter]

TWQ: What do you think about feminism in general?

RIVERS: It was wonderful in its time. They established that women can be CEOs. I think women like [Warnaco Group CEO] Linda Wachner never would have gotten where they are without it. I came from a family in which you were automatically expected to do something wonderful. If I had said I wanted to be a brain surgeon/astronaut, my parents would have said, "Yeah, fine, go, do." But let's get a grip. Just because you're a woman doesn't make you qualified for the job. You still have to be smart. The women's movement did convince every girl she could be a lawyer instead of a schoolteacher. That's one of the reasons we have so few schoolteachers.

TWQ: Has feminism gone way too far? For example, on the subject of sexual harassment. Has it gone overboard on that issue?

RIVERS: Women are wearing skirts up to their crotches and dresses cut way down. Then they're surprised when a man makes a pass? It's only sexual harassment when you don't find him attractive. Yes, of course, harassment is a legitimate concern sometimes, but a lot of the outcry is ridiculous.

TWQ: Why do you wear a bumblebee pin?

RIVERS: The bumblebee is not made to fly. According to the laws of aerodynamics, the ratio of its body weight to its wingspan should render it unable to fly. Yet it does. It achieves the impossible. My husband said I did this after I was told by my agent that I was too New York, that nobody outside of New York would understand me as a comedian. Then, the next year I was picked Comedian of the Year by the People's Poll. My husband went to Van Cleef's and had a bee pin made for me. I love that as a symbol. ◆

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Manhandling Madeleine

The media haven't laid a glove on our first female secretary of state. At last, *Wladyslaw Pleszczynski* tackles the man-sized job of looking beneath Madeleine Albright's chapeau

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT Madeleine. Arguably the saddest excuse for a secretary of state since Warren Christopher, she continues to show up for work, harrumph and harangue, and pretend she matters in an administration that pays her little notice. If there is any doubt where she stands in the pecking order, it came on April 7, when a page one *Washington Post* headline announced: "Albright Misjudged Milosevic on Kosovo." Two weeks after her bluster set off NATO's bombing campaign and massive Serbian retaliations against Kosovar Albanians, she was being put on notice.

If there was going to be a fall guy, a "senior official" seemed to imply, it certainly wasn't going to be the President or any of the men around him. The woman who had

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broken through Foggy Bottom's glass ceiling was now covered with shards. No one exactly rushed to her defense. Or at least not until the May 17 issue of *Time* came out, featuring a Churchillian cover photo of a leather-jacketed Albright barking out diplomacy, cellphone in her left ear, half-lenses on her lower nose. The "exclusive" story inside (by Managing Editor Walter Isaacson) mattered less than the eight black-and-whites that illustrated it, the most contrived such stills since those of John and Bobby Kennedy saving civilization as we knew it during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It wasn't until you returned to the fine print on the cover that you realized it showed heroic Madeleine on the phone with Ukraine's foreign minister. The more important calls, evidently, were being handled by higher-ups.

Norman Mailer had his opening. In a major attack on administration policy in the May 24 *Washington Post*, he dismissed Albright as no match for Milosevic because her climb to prominence came only "as a hostess charming up the Beltway's A-list." Not everyone let that comment pass. In a letter to the editor, Andrew L. Steigman, an associate dean of Georgetown's Walsh School of Foreign Service, scolded Mailer for a "personal attack" that was "demeaning, sexist and inaccurate." Yet he did agree with Mailer that Albright "may nonetheless have misjudged Mr. Milosevic" and conceded he, too, was "troubled by many aspects of U.S. and NATO policy with regard to Kosovo." He was prepared to defend her as a token, in other words, but not as a competent official. If faint praise was ever damning, it was when he called her "one of the best-qualified secretaries of state *in recent years*." (Emphasis mine, alas, not Warren Christopher's.)

With "victory" achieved, Albright would appear to be home safe. But hold on, countered Jack Kemp in a June 27 *Washington Times* op-ed. Calling the Kosovo war "unnecessary," "illegal and unconstitutional," he reminded readers that it failed to achieve any of the goals used to justify it, "exacerbated the very problems it sought to remedy and created new problems that will plague" the world for years. To prevent further "disastrous consequences" and to clear up the "fog of lies" that has enveloped our foreign policy, he called on Albright to resign. But since when has any Clinton official resigned for something as inconsequential as incompetence? There was no reaction to Kemp's call. That's not how the game is played.

One way it is played is Roger Cohen-style. In a lengthy *New Republic* review of Michael Dobbs' recent biography of Albright, Cohen endorsed Dobbs' groundbreaking work on Albright's suppressed Jewish origins and agreed she was disingenuous in feigning ignorance of her family past. But as a backer of the NATO war, Cohen was not about to use her questionable credibility against her. Indeed, as he sees it, once an outed Albright acknowledged her Jewishness—and the fact that some of her closest relatives died in the Holocaust—she was in a stronger moral position than ever to defend the intended victims of Slobodan Milosevic.

In his anti-Serbian fervor, Cohen never questioned whether Albright's chronic comparisons of Milosevic and Sarajevo/Kosovo to Hitler and Munich weren't perhaps overwrought. Hitler, for instance, was bent on expansion. Milosevic has presided over an ever-shrinking domain. More perversely, it could be also argued that in 1938 the West allowed Hitler to seize a German area of a sovereign state, and in 1999 it allowed the separation of an Albanian area from a sovereign state. As for the barbarity and injustice of ethnic cleansing, Dobbs reports that after World War II Albright's parents wound up in possession of valuable artwork seized from a prominent German-Austrian family expelled from Czechoslovakia—paintings still owned by their offspring. Though Albright has often claimed living in Belgrade as a small girl left her with a special understanding of the region, she didn't seem to develop any lasting attachments. You'd never know it was Serbs who arranged her family's escape from Hitlerism to the West in 1939 or that her family escaped communism in 1948 via Belgrade.

Ultimately, there's been little room for sentiment in Albright's life. In a way, who can blame her? Uprooted time and again in her childhood, it wasn't until her family settled in Denver in 1949 that she had anything resembling a permanent home. By then her father had already implanted the striving bug in her, and six years later she was on her way to Wellesley on a scholarship. Soon enough she met her husband-to-be Joseph Albright, part of a wealthy newspaper family, and married him a few days after graduation in 1959. What's less well known is that in settling on Joe Albright she broke off a relationship with her Denver boyfriend. A talented adopted son of working-class parents, he won a scholarship of his own to Princeton but soon foundered. Several years later, while at naval officer school in Pensacola, Florida, he died in a jail cell after crashing his car while apparently drunk.

The greatest humiliation of Albright's life came in early 1982 when Joe, after twenty-three years of mar-

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riage and three children, told her that he was in love with another woman and wanted a divorce. So badly did he want out that he left Madeleine a rich woman. She kept the Georgetown and hunt country properties, but her deep bitterness toward Joe continued long past the point that even close friends thought advisable. Saddest, perhaps, was that Madeleine had had no clue what was in the offing. Only a month or so before Joe made his announcement, Madeleine and a friend had picked up Joe at the airport from a business trip. Their reunion was incredibly affectionate, the friend recalled. A year earlier Madeleine had told the same friend, "The only thing I am sorry about in our relationship is that you don't have the same Cinderella marriage I do." It's not clear Madeleine has ever recovered.

Since her divorce she's apparently had only one serious romance, which the gentleman in question ended on the grounds that he wanted to have children. Madeleine by then was in her mid-forties, and by all accounts she's been alone ever since, though friends say she'd like to have a man in her life. When Albright tells Ann Blackman, author of a sympathetic 1998 biography, that today she feels fulfilled and wouldn't want to marry again, it doesn't ring true. Rather, it sounds more like what a late-blooming feminist would say after she's been abandoned.

Albright's feminism was indeed a post-divorce phenomenon, and it went hand-in-hand with her growing activism and networking in Democratic circles. Her first political work for presidential hopeful Sen. Edmund Muskie in the 1970s, and then for Zbigniew Brzezinski, her graduate school mentor and Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, was altogether traditional. However subservient her position was, she was adept at tempering both men's fiery dispositions and softening their political rough edges. Muskie's private temper tantrums didn't seem to faze her a bit. Women less well disposed toward such behavior would comment somewhat disapprovingly that Albright seemed perhaps too comfortable in the company of powerful men, even if kept out of the loop. By the 1980s, as feminism increasingly made its presence felt in Democratic politics, Albright was well positioned to take advantage of it.

In 1982, she joined the government department at Georgetown, which like other universities felt pressured to hire more women. In 1984 she became foreign policy adviser to woefully underprepared vice-presidential nominee Geraldine Ferraro, and in 1988 served presidential nominee Michael Dukakis in the same capacity. Biographers Blackman and Dobbs make much of the friendship that developed between Ferraro and Albright in the wake of 1984, and the circle of "golden girls" they formed along with the likes of Sen. Barbara Mikulski, Rep. Barbara Kennelly, Anne Wexler, and Donna Shalala. By 1992 the women were inseparable friends and allies, meeting on holidays and birthdays to plot and strategize and, as Blackman writes, to "share all aspects of their lives, from politics to Premarin." They often gather at Ferraro's St. Croix home. "We swim and boat and snorkel," Kennelly told Blackman. "We go totally natural."

Having met and hit it off with Bill Clinton during the Dukakis campaign, Albright emerged as a logical choice for U.N. ambassador upon Clinton's election in 1992, and she's been riding the gender politics express ever since. Whether she's as seriously committed to feminism's precepts as to her own advancement remains in dispute. At the U.N., for instance, there was much grumbling about Albright's lack of interest in the status of women at that male-dominated organization—even as Albright never missed an opportunity to curry favor with Hillary Rodham Clinton. When Warren Christopher resigned at the end of Bill Clinton's first term, it was all but a foregone conclusion that Albright would succeed him and in so doing become the first female secretary of state. Hillary Clinton's support proved indispensable, but the die was already cast when the *New York Times Magazine* ran a major profile of Albright on September 22, 1996, all but insisting Albright be named—or else. The clincher was probably a photograph that ran with the story, showing Hillary and Madeleine walking through Prague in pantsuits.

If any further proof was needed that Albright had arrived, it was a November 1996 luncheon as a special guest of a nine-woman group organized by network newswomen Lesley Stahl and Lynn Sherr. It included Kimba Wood, Faye Wattleton, Anna Quindlen, and Esther Newberg, and met at Sherr's "newly refurbished apartment near the United Nations," Blackman writes. There was much laughter and joking, but then someone brought up the subject of facelifts. "Albright said nothing," Blackman notes. "Several of her friends had discussed the possibility of her having one—maybe just a little tuck or two under the chin...." The world remains a very cruel place. ◆

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Ms. on Estrogen

Hot Flash! *Ms.* magazine is back! Nerves-of-steel correspondent ***Christine Stolba*** has read every *MS*-anthropic word of the 'zine that refers to one of the world's great novels as *Moby* what's-his-name

One might be forgiven for mistaking the newly re*vamp*ed *Ms.* magazine for a fetish 'zine. On the cover of the first installment, the April/May issue, was a grainy close-up of a woman's scarlet-lipped mouth, wide open to show a pearl-covered tongue and the caption, "Need wisdom?" Across the top were the words "Adultery, Money, Power, Politics, Faith, Facts 'n' Face-lifts." And the announcement: "We're back! Wake Up and Smell the Estrogen."

The new *Ms.* exudes self-importance. But then *Ms.* has always been more than a magazine. Since its inception in 1972, the activists who have run *Ms.* have billed it as a "state of mind." And they have been up front about its purpose: recruitment. In *Moving the Mountain*, a history of the women's movement, Flora Davis writes that Gloria Steinem and the other doyennes of *Ms.* believed "a glossy magazine that appeared every month on newsstands around the country might make feminists of thousands of women." Steinem has described the magazine's place in publishing history as that of "a forum for women's discoveries that we were not crazy, the system was crazy." Editor-in-Chief Marcia Gillespie writes that *Ms.* "is about celebrating women's spirits unbound, tongues untied, bodies unfettered." The contents of the new *Ms.* leave one wishing for the return of a few of those fetters.

Steinem recounts the saga of the magazine's resuscitation in the first reissue. She declares that the magazine "has been liberated by a new breed of women activists/investors" who have formed Liberty Media for Women, to underwrite the publication. Decrying the "masculinization of wealth" (which she blames for hampering women from investing in such projects as *Ms.*), she praises those brave female "philanthropists" of Liberty Media who "put their money and time where their hearts are."

Steinem notes that one unidentified financial backer is a woman who for years "had avoided dealing with her inheritance, partly out of guilt, partly because its source was a powerful father who had sexually abused her as a little girl." But when she finally put her money in the new *Ms.*, Steinem reports that "she found poetic justice in supporting a magazine that

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challenged male dominance." Marcia Gillespie refers to difficult interludes in the process of reacquiring *Ms.* as the "trying times during our struggle to gain our freedom."

From whom was *Ms.* "liberated" in this epic struggle? The very companies that bailed out the magazine when it was in dire financial straits a decade ago. Facing ruin, *Ms.* was sold in the late 1980s to John Fairfax, the publishing conglomerate that also owned the teen magazine *Sassy*. Other sales swiftly followed: to Lang Communications (publisher of *Working Woman* and *Working Mother* magazines) in 1989, and more recently to MacDonald Communications. The magazine's years under corporate ownership brought charges of pandering to advertisers and female vanity. *Backlash* author Susan Faludi dismissed the magazine's late 1980s incarnation as "lip-gloss reveries."

The current editors of *Ms.* have sought to distance themselves from the magazine's previous publishers, obliquely assigning them the blame for the periodical's difficulties. Never mentioning the recent owners by name, Steinem refers to them as the "other owners" or the "accidental owners," as if *Ms.*' rightful owners had fallen victim to greedy, male-dominated corporations.

But *Ms.*' longstanding financial mismanagement is legendary in publishing circles. The magazine's history, as told by Mary Thom in her book *Inside Ms.*, does not inspire confidence in the gals' good judgment. Even in the early years, when women were running *Ms.*, contributors went unpaid and putting out the magazine cost far more than the estimated budget. In what Thom describes as "a bizarre episode," a "dangerous imposter named Herta Wittgenstein managed to deceive a large portion of the *Ms.* staff over a period of months after gaining Steinem's sympathy." Crafty Herta, who appears to be a hanger-on who never held an official position at the magazine, had the staff of *Ms.* taking medicine she'd prescribed (Herta was not a medical doctor), joining her as passengers on planes she flew (she did not have a pilot's license), and even donating their blood to cure a "mysterious" (but nonexistent) disease from which she suffered.

While one might hope that such lapses of judgment will not plague the latest incarnation of *Ms.*, the editors' outlook for the magazine is troubling in other respects. Their mission, according to editor Gillespie, is "advocacy journalism." For Gillespie, the spirit of that mission is best captured by a photograph that hangs on the wall of her office: It is of a woman in prison. Writes Gillespie: "She's in prison, and for me the message in her unrestrained laughter is that you can't keep a good woman down." Curiously, we are never told what the good woman did to land in the slammer.

But there's plenty of material on crimes committed by men. In the August/September issue, Steinem reminds us that the recent spate of "senseless" killings in this country such as those at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, may not be as senseless as they appear. Such crimes "begin to seem less mysterious when you consider that they were committed disproportionately by white, nonpoor males," she says. Steinem's theory: White males are "the group most likely to become hooked on the drug of superiority. It's a drug pushed by a male-dominated culture that presents dominance as a natural right; a racist hierarchy that falsely elevates whiteness; a materialistic society that equates superiority with possessions, and a homophobic one that empowers only one form of sexuality." While Steinem concedes that the white male's "addiction to dominance" is not the sole cause of horrific crimes such as those committed by serial killers Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and David Berkowitz (whose deeds she catalogues), she believes that the alleged dominance-addiction is a prime motivation: "We'll never reduce the number of violent Americans, from bullies to killers," she writes, "without challenging the assumptions on which masculinity is based." Steinem calls on *Ms.* readers to end the "massive cultural cover-up of supremacy crimes."

As Steinem's contribution suggests, stories in the new *Ms.* range from the hyperbolic to the truly bizarre. In the April/May issue, for example, freelance writer Nomy Lamm waxes rhapsodic as she describes her love of fashion. A self-described "fat, hairy amputee" (we are left to guess which part of her body has been removed), Lamm would not be caught dead browsing the pages of *Vogue*. Instead, she describes the empowering moment when she realized she could dress up "like a hussy." Her prose is not for the faint-hearted: "The fashion industry tells me that I should wear flowing drapery that hides my body," Lamm writes, "so my decision to wear miniskirts and low-cut lingerie is a defiant and resounding 'F— you!'" Reveling in her newfound status as street spectacle, she says, "I see you looking, so I assume you know that I'm a fat, sleazy, crip dyke, a freedom fighting libertine and teenage heartthrob to boot. If you wanna play along, then let's play. If not, get the hell out of my way." Lamm's passion for fashion appears to be less about clothing than confrontation.

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Ms.' fashion sense is not the only puzzling thing. The magazine's political positions on everything from education, to women's wages, to the President's impeachment tend to take the most radical approach available. Mari Matsuda reaches new heights of hortatory fantasy when she writes that "in a perfectly imagined future, the feminist university of the next century would admit students by virtue of demonstrated commitment to creative tackling of sexism, racism, homophobia, and all forms of oppression. This visionary institution would also add bonus points for such strengths as coalition-building, overcoming class disadvantages, and conveying unique insights." After all, Matsuda reminds us, "our institutions of power—from the Senate to the boardroom—are dominated by men who do not know what sexism feels like."

Trotting out familiar slogans about women's wages ("as a woman, you're still earning less than most men—making on average, three quarters of what a man does") *Ms.* endorses legislation such as Sen. Harkin's Fair Pay Act, which would let bureaucrats decide how much people should make. *Ms.* points readers to the AFL-CIO's website "where you'll discover you might be losing over one million dollars in the course of your lifetime" simply because you are a woman.

Occupational segregation also raises *Ms.*' ire. The editors are eager to demolish those pesky cultural stereotypes that they believe trap women in low-paying, traditionally female occupations. And they want to start early: *Ms.* urges readers to target "kids' stereotypes about 'women's work'" by purchasing a twenty-five-page coloring book that shows women working in non-traditional fields. The coloring book features children cavorting in ideal, gender-neutral workplace sites and includes preposterous captions such as: "I'm really proud of my grandmother. She has been a heavy equipment operator for many years."

Alas, *Ms.*' grasp of politics is schizophrenic. While contributor Tanya Melich claims that Americans are "irritated with the extremism of the Religious Right," the magazine devotes several pages to hand-wringing over the results of a recent survey that suggests just the opposite. According to the survey, which was conducted by former Planned Parenthood president Faye Wattleton's Center for Gender Equality, in the past six years, there has been a 40 percent increase in the number of women who believe that politicians should be guided by religious values, and a significant erosion of women's support for abortion rights. The survey also indicates that women are showing more conservative and more religious tendencies. Wattleton admits that she was confounded. "Something is happening," she frets, and "we have to find out what's going on in women's heads."

The magazine also asked a number of "provocative thinkers" for their thoughts on the subject of adultery. The results were published in the April/May issue. Offering the lesbian perspective on adultery, Connecticut College English professor Blanche McCrary Boyd assures readers that "adultery is a legal concept, not a moral one." She praises President Clinton for bringing "sex out of the closet." For those shy misses who have not "done something at least as racy as Bill Clinton's game with his cigar," Boyd orders: "Get busy." She ends by stating that monogamy and commitment are really only a matter of perception. After all, she writes, "heterosexuals cloak desire in state-sanctioned, church-sanctioned unions," but "underneath lies a rotten layer of secrecy, hypocrisy, repression."

Such pronouncements are in keeping with *Ms.*' attitude toward marriage. The magazine has always approached the institution of heterosexual marriage as guilty until proven innocent. In her history of the magazine, Mary Thom recounts the turmoil that ensued when, in 1979, a staff member announced her intention to get hitched. "Gloria [Steinem] had said she would never get married unless the ERA passed," one staffer recalled. "Without full equality, the reasoning went, marriage was a risky business for women." The *Ms.* solution? Have the ceremony in Iceland, "which had the most egalitarian constitution." For the record: the groom evidently nixed this idea and the couple got married instead in upstate New York, where they were serenaded with feminist poetry.

While a few of the contributors to *Ms.*' adultery roundtable admit that infidelity undermines relationships (two even affirm their commitment to monogamy), most of the essayists embrace the cynical notion that a committed, monogamous marriage is inherently exploitative to a woman. As such, *Ms.* must provide women with advice from their tougher enlightened sisters. As contributor Jennifer Belle puts it, "If I had a man wearing my ring and taking the subway home to me I'd be faithful to him," she says, "and if he cheated on me I'd forgive him. Either that or hack off his penis." Such lighthearted drollery from a magazine that decries female genital mutilation!

As for *Ms.*' judgment of the Monica Lewinsky morass, the magazine embraces her. Susie Bright laments

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that "gifted young women like Monica dwell in a purgatory of thwarted ambition" and scolds Monica's dad—"Father Lewinsky"—for not having "celebrated his daughter's coming of age with all due seriousness." "This big girl," she concludes, "should have been mentored to run the world, not run little games around the little men who inhabit it."

In "Oral Report," essayist Susan Jane Gilman opts for a cruder fantasy than Monica-world-domination. She simply wonders, "Just what did it feel like to have the President's [anatomical feature] in your mouth?" and considers whether Monica realized that she "could change the course of history just by biting down?" Oral fixations aside, it is disturbing that a magazine that claims to advance the cause of women can in all seriousness claim that "the founding fathers would have loved Monica," since she, like them, wanted her president to be just a "regular guy."

Readers of *Ms.* will also come up empty-handed if they try to find serious, critical reviews of current books. Advocacy literary criticism joins advocacy journalism in the magazine's book review section, which offers thoughts on books such as *The Feminist Memoir Project*; *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: My Life as a Hip-Hop Feminist*; and *Adios Barbie: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity.* Of this last book, reviewer Noelle Howey notes that it "appropriately castigates Barbie" for serving as "the bane of young women who grew up expecting to blossom from puberty into Mattel's unrealistic mold." She singles out for special praise essayist Erin J. Aubry's paean to her plentiful and un-Mattel-like posterior. "In one inspiring moment," Howey gushes, "after she finds that she can't haul her jeans up past her ankles, Aubry rejoices in her butt looming 'triumphant, like Ali dancing over Liston: Don't you know who I am?" Evidently this is what qualifies as serious feminist literature to the editors of *Ms.*

There is also a review of a book whose title, with apologies to our readers, is *C-nt: A Declaration of Independence.* In the book, author Inga Muscio encourages her female readers to embrace the title word as a symbol of empowerment. As reviewer Anastasia Higginbotham notes, "women all have [one], and we've all been called one." Moreover, Muscio's book reminds us that this particular four-letter word was "once a term of respect," but that it "has been spoiled over the years by men who fear it." For the still skeptical, Higginbotham assures readers that the book "is loaded with practical guidance, resources, and motivation for women who desire reproductive control, fabulous orgasms, sisterhood, self-protection, even financial independence and power as consumers." Higginbotham commends the author's "nurturing, nonjudgmental" writing style. Muscio, she says, is "fully cognizant of the fact that c-nts have been the source of much pain and humiliation in women's lives," and so she "lets her love abound on every page."

In another article, *Ms.* lambastes the Learning Channel's "Great Books" series for failing to include female authors. "Entries like *Moby* what's-his-name, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Lord of the Flies* are almost exclusively about guys," they state. The irony should not be lost on readers that *Ms.* is a magazine that coyly avoids printing the full title of *Moby Dick* but twenty-five pages later will gleefully quote feminist theology professor Mary Daly's assessment of her critics as "d—heads." (Daly, who recently made headlines by refusing to allow registered male students to enter her classroom at Boston College, admits in a lengthy interview with *Ms.* that her biggest fear is that her work "will be erased by a woman-hating, woman-destroying patriarchal culture.")

Perhaps realizing that *Ms.* contains much fodder for critics, the editors cheerfully encourage readers to voice their complaints and offer suggestions for improving the magazine. But in calling for critiques, *Ms.* wants only the constructive thoughts of true believers. As for critics who dismiss *Ms.* as irrelevant or ridiculous, editor Marcia Gillespie says she could "care less" about these "professional feminist bashers." *Au contraire.* Every issue of the new *Ms.* contains a section on a "woman to watch out for," someone whose work has raised feminist hackles. State University of New York trustee (and Independent Women's Forum National Advisory Board member) Candace deRussy is *Ms.*' target in its latest issue; the previous issue targets modesty maven and *TWQ* contributor Wendy Shalit.

For a magazine like *Ms.*, which enjoys touting its own historical and social significance, it is perhaps fitting that the most deadly criticism one can level at it is that even in its new and improved form, it is already a relic—a reminder of a movement that long ago lost touch with American women. *Ms.*' feminist theater of the absurd is a production that plays to a limited audience. ◆

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The Plight of the PC Dad

Father used to know best. But now he comes home from work and is handed a squalling baby and told to do the dishes. ***Meghan Cox Gurdon*** sympathizes

EVEN THE LEAST compassionate of conservative hearts is sometimes moved to pity by liberal persons; I mean, that is, to pity them for themselves, for the awkward places their politics can place them. I felt just such a gush of sympathy—or was it a "click" moment?—in a gathering of friends not long ago. We were sitting in a Georgetown garden in Washington, D.C., sipping cocktails, when the talk turned to dangerous places. My friend Philip, a lefty lawyer who has advised governments in Africa, told a chilling tale of theft in Lagos. The talk meandered, and during a lull, I leaned over to him:

"And there's poor Sarah," I murmured, pointing with my chin at a mutual friend. "Her husband's been sent to Kosovo." What I meant was, "Poor Sarah, her beloved breadwinner could soon be shot." I suppose another interpretation might have been, "Poor Sarah, with no one to share her bed." But I was ill-prepared for his interpretation, which he delivered conspiratorially: "Not that he does much *child-care* when he is around, from what I hear." I tell you, I was thunderstruck. Here we were, chatting of life-threatening matters, and the first thing that came to Philip's mind was child-care. The dear brainwashed fellow! Is that what he thinks women care most about, the equitable distribution of household tasks? Casting my mind swiftly across our circle of Georgetown acquaintances, I realized that for many women that is, actually, the acid test of a good husband (or, ugh, "partner"). What's worse, the men agree. The vast majority of liberal men are required by their politics to accept feminism and its teachings about the oppressively patriarchal nature of the traditional nuclear family. They harbor guilt for the compromises their wives have made to have children, whether by getting on the slow-lane mommy track, or by "giving up" a career altogether. The result, based on an unscientific sampling of people I know, is men who commute and work long hours, and arrive home to "what kept you so long?" find themselves handed a squalling baby, and are expected to transform themselves from Masters of the Universe into Mother Goose.

These are not bohemian individuals, but absolute sitcom standards: A father who works, a wife who stays at home, 2.5 children, and, generally, a dog. They live in neat nuclear families, just as in the 1950s they scorn, yet in these households *Father Is Not Allowed to Know Best.* He is not, for that

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matter, allowed to take his ease with the newspaper—at least until the children are in bed. There's the salesman who regularly returns home from grueling twelve-hour days to scenes of disaster and chaos. Were he to suggest, even delicately (as happened once in my hearing), that his wife might at least have begun cooking supper, let alone tidied up the toys, he risks accusations that he's imposing a return to the horrors of the benighted 1950s.

(I have to say, if I were a man, that's what I'd want: A martini and slippers at the door, a commodious armchair, and freshly scrubbed children presenting their school reports to me before supper. But that's me.)

In another family I know, the husband runs a consulting firm from an upstairs bedroom; his wife quit her job when the babies arrived. He descends at 12:30 to feed the children their lunch (and clean up afterwards), and again sharply at 5:30 to oversee their supper. How nice, one is tempted to say, for a man to be so involved with his children. Yet the truth is that he is close to breaking under the strain of being both house husband and sole wage earner. But he can't say anything; to do so would not be politically correct.

This very point was made beautifully on the radio the other day, in a related context. National Public Radio's Terry Gross was talking with the actor and sixties revolutionary Peter Coyote, when the subject turned to the practice of free love in that ideologically debauched decade:

Terry Gross: "Did you ever try to convince [the women you were sleeping with] that [jealousy was] a feeling they should try to overcome, to transcend, to get more behind the values of the community and give up this possessiveness? "

Peter Coyote: "Were you eavesdropping on me? [Laugh.] Yeah, it's kind of embarrassing to see what kind of a snake-oil salesman I could be, but I believed it. And I can remember times where the shoe was on the other foot, where my feelings were hurt or I was kind of crushed, but I couldn't throw a tantrum. I couldn't really do anything. I was hoisted on my own petard and had to live with it."

Thus it is with many liberal fathers, who must live with the emasculating consequences of their beliefs. So where there ought to be resentment, there's resignation. Where there ought to be manly refusal, there is womanish compliance. Oh, occasionally behind the men's eyes you can see a struggle, the submerged question of whether they haven't a right to expect a bit of domestic comfort (of the kind their fathers perhaps enjoyed). But egalitarian feminism has been at work on these fellows for three decades now; the fight is long since over. Resistance is futile.

I SUSPECT THAT the domestic oppression of fathers is closely connected to the destruction wrought in the sixties on the traditional role of the housewife. Women's domain used to be a place of pride and accomplishment. Our grandmothers would have been annoyed and embarrassed if their husbands had begun fussing over baby's formula or meddling with the laundry. But the feminist revolution torched the fine old edifice of housewifery. It blasted contempt at women who stayed at home in traditional roles, and shame grew where pride had once flourished. And that is why modern fathers are so dreadfully compromised. They are still required to perform the wage-earning duties of their fathers, but without enjoying any enhanced household status because of it. They are, further, schooled to believe that their stay-at-home wives suffer in a unique way—this reminds me of the satirical refrigerator magnet given to me by a liberal friend. It depicts a pretty fifties housewife patting a baby, and reads: "WOW! I get to give birth AND change diapers!" Yes, and husbands get to commute AND work all day. To show that they are not brutish oppressors from the 1950s (there's that decade again), these men must "share" the work of running the home. They spend Saturday mornings at the supermarkets their wives had all week to visit. They rise at 3 A.M. to bottle-feed infants, before showering and heading off to work. The whole business strikes me as deeply unfair, but then, feminism was never really about equality. Its goal is to promote the desires, attributes, and, heaven help us, the "voices" of women over those of men.

Feminists have long argued that paid employment is the highest mark of social utility, the wellspring of self-esteem and economic independence. That is a rosy view: Anyone who has held a full-time job knows that work can also be frustrating, dull, and draining. But if women really believe that paid work has worth, and even nobility, then they ought to value it whether it is they, or their husbands, who put in the long hours.

"I get to do whatever I want all day while he's at work," says my friend Sarah, who runs a traditional household and whose husband is now safely returned from Kosovo. "Why should he have to babysit when he gets home?" Why, indeed? Pity the plight of politically correct fathers. They can't change their politics, so they wind up changing diapers. ◆

Meghan Cox Gurdon is a writer in Washington, D.C.

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Cover

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

They don't quite know why, but they feel they're getting shortchanged. *Pia Nordlinger* takes her notebook on campus and finds out what young women really want

Drawings by Charles Jaffé

When it comes to sex, a young man entering college today has it made: He won't have to shell out for flowers, a pricey dinner or a sappy chick flick. He won't even have to call her the next day. Guess who won the Sexual Revolution?

Indeed, as soon as his parents wheel away in the mini-van, Junior finds himself in a sexual paradise. College these days is all about "hooking up." A hook-up is a night of naughty romping that may or may not include sexual intercourse. The "relationship" usually ends when the girl tiptoes out the door next morning.

"Hooking up is a way to relieve sexual frustration," said Sarah, a junior at Kenyon College. "There's nothing morally wrong with hooking up," said Ashley, a recent graduate of Columbia University.

While talking to young women who are still undergraduates or graduated last spring, I was consistently told that hooking up is standard. Dating is an anomaly. "If a guy asked you out on a date," said Anne, a senior at the University of Rhode Island, "it would be like 'Whoa! This really means something.'" Samantha, a junior at Colgate University, concurred: "Wow! A date would mean he's interested in you."

Make no mistake, girls are often just as interested in exercising their sexual freedom as the guys are—one Villanova senior insisted that "guys do not perpetuate the standards alone."

Although girls defend the practice of hooking up, they sense that they are getting shortchanged. They know that the status quo—going to bars, drinking too much, and following a guy home to bed—is somehow detrimental. The problem for them is that they are both unwilling and unable to articulate why.

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Just Like a Boy

BUT DR. DREW PINSKY, co-host of MTV's call-in show "Loveline" and proprietor of *USA Weekend*'s "Ask Dr. Drew" column, thinks he knows what's wrong: Today's sexual code is perfect for adolescent boys but not for girls. Writing in *USA Weekend*, Pinsky observed:

"It's clear to me that the generation that came of age in the 1960s had a notion of sexual equality that was poorly thought out. It seems to have been conceived by and for seventeen-year-old boys. Men think, 'This is great!' And all women find from [the current sexual scene] is disillusionment. We've been forced to operate under the false assumption that men and women are the same and should behave the same. In fact, men and women are very different, especially when it comes to intimacy. When a woman is physically intimate with somebody, she has a deeper experience. Most men will be physically intimate with whatever hits their fancy. It can be emotional for them, but it usually doesn't have to be."

Dr. Drew, who is forty and the father of six-year-old triplets, went on to say that he is continually locking horns with parents who grew up in the sixties and still believe that a girl is just like a boy. "To them, sex was exciting, liberating," Pinsky wrote. "But young people today live in a different world. They've never had to repress their sexuality. They're free with their sexual vocabulary and the range of behaviors they feel comfortable exploring. The problem is, they still don't understand the consequences. The most common question I get is, 'Why does he behave like that? How could he do that?'"

Author Wendy Shalit, whose book, *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue,* stirred up controversy when it was published earlier this year, also blames the hook-up culture partly on the failure to socialize young males. The girls inevitably suffer from this. Indeed, Ashley, the recent Columbia graduate, told of a friend's despair after she had her first sexual experience on a hook-up. "What's destructive about hook-ups is that some people don't have a lot of experience," she said. Ashley added that her friend had sex simply because she assumed she was supposed to, but that when he never called back, "she was destroyed."

Ashley's friend might have been hurt partly through naivete. But, in a way, she was right about the expectations of the post-sexual revolution male: Girls who hook up are as expendable as hookers.

"Today," writes Shalit, "men expect to be able to treat all women like prostitutes, only without just compensation, and the virgins are the ones who are now stigmatized, told that no man will have them—just as the prostitutes of old were once told that no man would ever love them."

Eyes Wide Shut

WHAT LESSONS DID Ashley draw from her friend's misfortune? She said that both parties should realize that sex is separate from emotions and talk about this issue before jumping into bed. "You have to be up front about your feelings," she said. "You have to be clear on what your intentions are." Sarah's advice to teenaged girls was similar: "You'll definitely get disappointed if you are looking for something more than one night," she said. "You have to go into a hook-up with your eyes open."

Trouble is, hooking up generally follows drinking. In a boozy stupor, keeping your eyes open is tricky. Surprisingly, most of the girls, while defending the practice of hooking up, expressed concern about alcohol consumption. Several girls mentioned, unprompted—and without a hint of irony—that the problem with booze is that it leads to…hooking up. "Alcohol is absolutely part of this," said Jessica, a student at the University of Texas at Austin. "Otherwise 99 percent of it wouldn't happen."

"People leave the bar hand in hand," said Christina, University of Iowa, class of '99. She described the "drinking scene" on her campus as "huge" and linked to hooking up. After all, she added, "You don't go to the library to hook up." A recent Harvard study indicates that drinking is, indeed, a factor. The study found that 39 percent of college women are binge drinkers (which is defined as having more than four drinks in a row). Of these, 26 percent reported engaging in unplanned sexual activity.

And, apparently, many weren't happy in the morning. Thirty-two percent of the women told the 1997 Sex on Campus survey that they had had sex with someone they didn't even like. Forty-one percent of the male respondents reported the same thing. When asked for a reason, 45 percent of the men and 48 percent of the women, replied, "It just happened."

Backlash

BUT THERE MAY be a backlash. Young women told me that hooking up inevitably loses its appeal, becoming less popular after the freshman year. "As we get older," a Villanova senior e-mailed, "females tend to make wiser decisions about hooking up. I feel that they have learned that random hook-

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ups are not beneficial and won't make a guy like you more." Christina offered an intensely painful reason to remove oneself from the hook-up scene: "Once you get dogged [jilted] so many times," she said, "it just gets old."

"You'll definitely get disappointed if you are looking for something more than one night."

Said Samantha of Colgate: "I would rather have people take psychological closeness more seriously. It bothers me that people do all this sexual stuff together and then don't bother to talk to each other." No matter how much they are bothered, however, girls strive not to be judgmental about the behavior of their peers. Even the young woman who confided to me that she had left the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign because she was disgusted with the self-destructive sexual conduct of fellow students, was careful not to criticize. "I wasn't going to say anything preachy," she said.

When I asked women if they wanted a return to the more traditional world of dating—one in which a guy would actually walk up and say, "Would you like to go to a movie Saturday night?"—most were receptive. Ironically, Sarah from Kenyon—vociferous in her defense of hook-ups—admitted that the idea was not without appeal. "Sure, I'd like a dating scene. I'd love to have guys more interested in a woman's personality," she said. Dating, I was told by several others, "weeded out the people who weren't worth it," and is "more of a positive experience," "much better," and "healthier."

Perhaps there's even a longing for a little romance. Describing herself as a member of "the first generation to have sex education in elementary schools," and quoting Alexander Sanger's famous remark that "teens need all the facts [about sex]," Shalit—Williams '97—theorizes that the reason her generation has flocked to Jane Austen movies is that "we're sick of having the facts shoved in our faces all the time. One is entitled to imagine that there might be something more to hope for than all this dreary crudeness." ◆

Pia Nordlinger, a '96 graduate of Kenyon College, is a member of the editorial board of the New York Post. *The names in this story have been changed.*

The Death of Intimacy

Family therapist *Patrick Fagan* looks at what we've lost

WHAT IS THE long-term impact of casual sex on teenagers? We talked to University College Dublin-trained psychologist and family therapist Patrick Fagan. A former deputy assistant secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services during the Bush administration, Fagan is the William H.G. FitzGerald Fellow in Family and Culture Studies at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C.

TWQ: What does so much casual sex on campus ultimately do to the young women who participate in it?

FAGAN: It will be very difficult for these young women to find intimacy, romance and true love. Casual sex leads to the death of intimacy. The person who trades in counterfeit money is not likely to become an investment banker. Intimacy demands trust. Take one form of intimacy: self-revelation. If I reveal something precious to someone I do not trust I am a fool. For all of us, there are parts of us that are so intimate, so delicately close to the core of our being that we will entrust this knowledge to very few. Arriving at such trust is a two-way street, a mutual deep friendship. The giving of the body is a sealing of this trust and self-revelation. Most of these young women will fail to find love and grow

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disillusioned and put up good defenses. Many will seek the meaning of life in money or power and their jobs. For them, men may become occasional sources of diversion, but, in general, more trouble than comfort. Increasing numbers will have their children out of wedlock or, if they marry, eventually divorce. They may have a child and live for the child and themselves. They will give a certain type of mother love—and it will be quite giving—but it will not be the kind of parental love that makes their children likely to have stable marriages later.

TWQ: What about the effect of the prevalence of casual sex on young men?

FAGAN: When these boys become men, they will find the easy sex of their young years will give way to women who will not trust or love them in their thirties. By their forties or fifties, they will find meaning in work and recreational pursuits such as golf. Both men and women will be aware of their alienation and will pursue various forms of anesthesia such as work or sports. But whatever pursuit they choose will not be harmful to the body, which will still be glorified.

TWQ: Why is casual sex so appealing to these kids?

FAGAN: Many of them come from homes in which their parents have failed to lead lives of love. Only 40 percent of our children now reach eighteen in an intact family. Sixty percent of the mothers and fathers in this country cannot stand each other enough to overcome their differences and take care of their children. To pursue their own happiness, they leave the children to fend for themselves. There is a direct relationship between the absence of parental love in growing up and the inclination to fill the void with the ecstasy of orgasm. Given the emotional background of many kids today, it is understandable that sex comes before love. Many do not believe that love is possible, at least for them.

TWQ: There was a disturbing article in the *Washington Post* about middle-school children who avoid intercourse but engage in oral sex. What do you make of this?

FAGAN: The kids are being quite logical. The stimulus of sexual relativism is all around them. They learn it from the media culture, in sex education classes, and from the behavior of unattached adults. We adults are adrift in our own sexual chaos; we have no moral norms in this area. No wonder children are confused. And the bright ones think they have figured out a way to take care of the situation by engaging in oral sex. Normally we rejoice when kids achieve something beyond their years. But not in this instance.

TWQ: Why is there so much sexual confusion at this particular point in history?

FAGAN: We are into about the fourth generation since the unraveling of our sexual ethic began. It started in the 1930s when the Lambeth Conference, the governing body of the Anglican Church, became the first major Christian organization to break the universal Christian and Jewish tradition that the sexual act cannot be severed from procreation. The conference's decision [that contraception is sometimes acceptable] caused an uproar. Even the *Washington Post* editorialized against "the reformers." But by the 1950s, contraception was a widespread practice within marriage. The children of that generation took the next logical step. In the sexual revolution, they cut the tie between sex and marriage. The rest has been a gradual free fall. What society once regarded as perversions are now considered merely variations on the theme of sexual pleasure.

TWQ: What sort of messages do children today get about sex?

FAGAN: On sex, our children are being sold a pig in a poke. The best sex is to be had by church-going married people who have only one partner. Conservative evangelical women report the greatest sexual enjoyment. Catholic women report the most frequent sexual enjoyment. That is what a 1994 study by the University of Chicago found. Hugh Hefner was a total fraud but a great snake-oil salesman who made his millions on the glossy promise of sexual nirvana. By nature, we are all easily tempted. At least, I know I am. But one would imagine that with all the "experts" out there the real message would be out by now: Find the girl who goes to church, has marriage on her mind and will slap you if you push too hard.

TWQ: Are there any signs you see as hopeful?

FAGAN: Yes. I'm finding that college students are guarded about this subject, but they do admit that they have suffered a lot because of the sexual revolution and their parents' divorces. They don't believe their parents had all the answers, and they are willing to entertain other ideas. National data show a significant rise in virginity among high-school students. Elayne Bennett's Best Friends, which upholds the goal of abstinence instead of contraception for teenaged girls, is changing the general debate. And good data are finally getting out: There is a real change among top sociologists. Couple all this with the drive deep in the human heart for happiness and the knowledge that real happiness is more precious than pleasure and a brighter future beckons. ◆

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Springtime for Virginity

Ivy McClure reports that an old-fashioned notion is suddenly in vogue again

Is virginity making a comeback? Some signs point to yes. A billboard proclaims, "Virgin. Teach Your Kid It's Not a Dirty Word," and some more traditional religious groups in particular are putting a renewed emphasis on chastity.

One of the best known programs is called True Love Waits. True Love Waits, which is endorsed by eighty churches and various health organizations, asks young men and women to sign a "covenant card" that promises not to engage in sex before marriage.

Parents of young people who participate give them a ring to symbolize the vow. Carol Bauer, wife of presidential candidate Gary Bauer, says her daughter Sarah, eighteen, participated in a four-week True Love Waits program. For the Bauers, the program is appealing for its specifically religious content.

True Love Waits reports that 618,000 young adults have taken the pledge —a not inconsequential group. "The counter culture of the sixties was all about free love and sex without consequence," says True Love spokesman Paul Turner. "Today, the new counter culture is about returning to traditional values."

There are indications that the new counter culture may be spilling into the mainstream. The beauty pageant scene has featured contestants from at least eight states whose "platforms" were chastity. Although repeatedly told that such a politically incorrect platform would prevent her from winning, Mary-Louise Kurey stuck to her guns and was crowned Miss Wisconsin in July. "Premarital sex is just making young people today suffer so much," she told the *Washington Times*.

"I certainly expected more smirks than I got," Wendy Shalit, author of the widely reviewed book, *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*, tells *TWQ*. The book defends chastity, and it's no surprise the reviewers were not uniformly admiring: "This is a book about an oppressed group that you might not have heard of before: virgins," began a catty review of Shalit's book by Emily Eakin.

Shalit remains undaunted by the inevitable criticism she's taken. "We have these cultural arbiters who associate maturity with sexual adventurousness," says Shalit, "but deep down, most Americans know that modesty is a sign of self-worth.

"The problem," Shalit continues, "is that the exhibitionists, who are really the minority, rule by intimidation and make the majority feel there is something wrong with them. And the majority is not yet comfortable with the case for modesty. That is why I wanted to look at modesty historically in my book and expose the myths associated with it. Modesty is not a Victorian notion and it has nothing to do with prudery. It's really about preserving mystery and the power of profound connections. I think debunking the myths about modesty is the first step, but it's only the first step."

Statistics indicate, however, that teenaged sexual activity may be declining—if only slightly. According to a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in 1998, the percentage of sexually active high school students, aged fifteen to nineteen, fell from 54 percent to 48 percent from 1991 to 1997.

Shalit isn't certain that young people are more abstinent today, but she says that, if they are, it's not what you may think—fear of AIDS—that is preventing them from engaging in sexual activity. "If there really is less sexual activity, it's modesty and not AIDS at work," she said. "AIDS is just an excuse [that some may give] because emotional vulnerability is more embarrassing to admit to than physical vulnerability. I heard a girl on MTV say that she was 'sort of glad' she had gotten herpes because now she 'had an excuse to say no.' Her no [would be interpreted as] a hang-up, a pathology. It still takes a disease to [give her the right to refuse to have sex and to] make her 'no' comprehensible to this crazy culture."

The public reception of Shalit's book, which came out in January, may itself be yet another indication of a renewed respect for chastity. What's next for Shalit?

"If I told you," Shalit jokes, "it probably wouldn't be modest." ◆

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The Token Man

The Taming of the Dude

Rod Dreher grows up

My guy pals were raising their glasses to me at our favorite saloon in Fort Lauderdale. I had flown the previous weekend to Austin, Texas, a ring in my pocket, and returned with the promise of marriage in a year's time. I was, of course, exhilarated.

But something was wrong. The bar had lost its gloss. I was jumpy, bored, restless. What was the point of sitting here, working on a hangover? My friends were great, and this was the best bar in town. So why did I feel as if I were drinking a flat Coke?

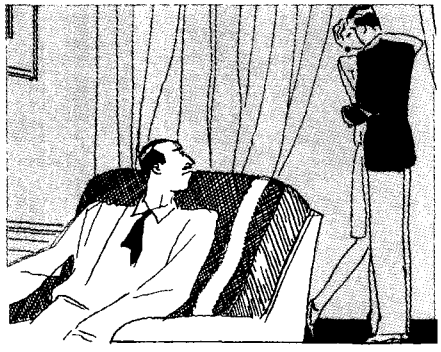
This is a story about the taming of the dude. My fiancée, Julie, was in college halfway across the country, but putting that ring on her finger had broken the spell of the pick-up bar. It had been years since I'd actually picked up someone in a bar, mind you. A conversion to Catholicism does tend to rein in the bad boy. But I still went out all the time. What else could I do? Stay home?

Hey, my True Love might turn up any night, I told myself. We might discover our joint destiny sipping bourbon, talking about God and the movies, and uttering witty imprecations against modernity. If Walker Percy were a young bachelor, wouldn't he be doing the same thing?

But the desire to go out had almost vanished since the day I met Julie in an Austin bookstore. I'd assumed I'd want to get in as much carousing as possible before I was lashed to hearth and home. But I was wrong. The e-word (emasculation) came up among my unmarried male pals. But I didn't care. Something subtle, inchoate but real was happening: I wasn't like them anymore.

Julie and I were both worried about merging households. She has always been a fastidious housekeeper, while I was a Boy Whose Mama Picked Up After Him.

When we married and moved to New



York, it was not the easiest transition. I was twenty-nine years old, and it had never occurred to me that dishes needed to be done daily, not whenever the sink got full. Under the new regime, dirty clothes didn't remain on the floor where they fell; sheets were changed with dazzling speed (anything more than once a month).

This is the stuff of bad domestic comedy, I realize, but learning to live like a grownup instead of a superannuated teenager effected a spiritual transformation within me. I began to see taking care of domestic chores as part of taking care of Julie. Though she never put it to me like this, it became clear to me that loving her meant that I would have to quit adoring my piggish bachelor self so much. It meant sacrificing the freedom I had to keep house like a layabout.

On a higher level, it meant leaving the worn-out melodrama of guyhood for the awesome adventure of manhood. I expected that I would learn these things of reluctant necessity.

What I didn't expect was the joy I would find in taking on the burden of these responsibilities. The life of the married man is a wondrous and fearful thing to the single guy. The single guy wants the timeless joy of married life, but he is terrified of its potential cost to his everyday happiness.

I am not so far along into marriage that I've forgotten what it's like to have those fears. But now that I am here, I am grateful beyond all telling. If someone had told me only three years ago how much fun it would be to spend Saturday night roasting chicken and playing Scrabble, I would have mocked him. If that man had told me I would quit fantasizing about fast convertibles and start coveting a Weber grill, I would not have believed him. The single guy is weightless: he can choose to stay out till 3 A.M., or not; he can break up with this girl, and start an affair with that one, and very little of it matters at all. But once you've freely yoked your own life inextricably with another's, and taken on the burden of manhood, all your choices gain moral and philosophical weight. Things matter. Life ceases to be melodrama, or comedy, and becomes something altogether more satisfying and substantial.

Milan Kundera once observed, "The heavier the burden, the closer our lives come to the earth, the more real and truthful they become." This is the secret treasure you discover when you give up a bachelor's freedom, a lightness that may have itself become an intolerable load.

Having tamed the dude, we are preparing for yet another miracle. In October, God willing, my wife will give birth to our first child. I will on that day become, with Julie, wholly responsible for another life. Very few burdens are weightier than this, but what is that to a man who can leap over all of Brooklyn in a single bound? ◆

Rod Dreher is the chief movie critic for the New York Post.

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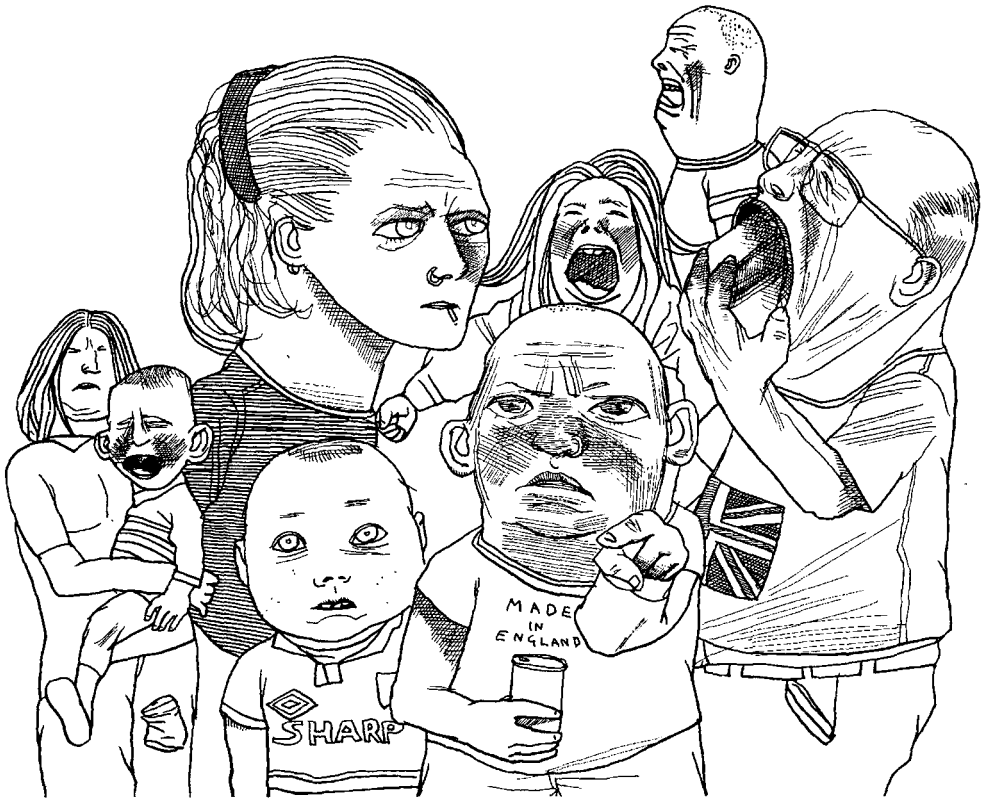
The Rudeness Patrol

Rude Britannia

Twelve years ago, New York literary journalist ***Rhoda Koenig*** went to England in pursuit of a more civilized way of life. She laments the decline and fall of English manners



On December 31, 1986, I arrived in London to begin not only the New Year but my new life. Everyone thought I was mad. I had a good, cheap apartment and a well-paid job in literary journalism, both great rarities in New York.

Those, however, did not matter as much to me as what made the city increasingly ugly, frightening, and inhumane. When I walked down the street I had to block out all sights and sounds that were not directly ahead of me. If not, a man might rattle a paper cup filled with coins under my nose, or stare at me, open his mouth, and quickly flap his tongue.

If I went anywhere after dark, I had to be extremely alert, stepping quickly between the front door and the necessary taxi. Every morning and evening, as the subway trains rolled in, I would be reminded by the graffiti that covered them that we were all hostages of the angry, the wicked, and the mad.

But it was not simply my growing distaste for New York that had brought me there. England called. For several years I had been spending my holidays there and had made many friends. I disliked some English characteristics—dowdiness, pettiness, coldness, defeatism—but felt that these were the defects of English virtues. Unlike America, England was a place where optimism and self-confidence had not reached psychotic proportions. Strangers in England would not assume I wanted to hear their life story or have them call me by my first name.

When the plane touched down, I felt I was coming home. But the England of today is not the one of twelve years ago. It is not simply a matter of some things having disappeared and others having altered. Not only do people behave differently—the assumptions which underlie their behavior have undergone a profound change, making England more and more like the place I left.

As a writer, I have found this useful—feeling that all of England had turned into Cold Comfort Farm inspired me to write a contemporary version of that wonderful novel. Otherwise, though, it's quite another story.

My London home lies in a strip of middle-class territory, a narrow lozenge of three-story, red-brick, late-Victorian terraces halfway down a hill. Our neighborhood is a pleasant one: A New York friend who stayed with me went out one day for the paper and returned in shock—a strange woman had actually smiled at him and said: "Good morning."

But from 8 to 8:30 A.M. each week day and 3 to 3:30 P.M., my neighborhood is not a pleasant place. At those times the local teenagers (who are nearly all white) go to and from their

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school (rated one of the best in the borough) and, as they pass my study, I hear them enunciating emphatically, once every twelve words, or seven, or three, "F— F—in', Who the f— ?" They are loud enough to be heard from the other side of the street, through the window. The girls are worse than the boys.

The teenagers do not live in our neighborhood. They walk through it from the council blocks lower down the hill, the homes of the—what? The lower class? The lower middle class? The working class? The poor? Each of these phrases has been challenged whenever I have used it. Indeed, the people living in those blocks are too various to be embraced by one simple term. Some go to work each day, but some do not work and are clearly incapable of it. Some have food and furniture that would make others call them poor, but they also have enough entertainment facilities (satellite dishes, videos, music machines, drink) to annoy the entire neighborhood. Some wear more expensive clothes than middle-class people did when I was a child, yet their behavior is the sort that, not long ago, I would have expected only from the violently antisocial or the mentally ill.

A woman of the last type was in the queue at my bank recently. She began a violent quarrel with another woman, who flounced out while she carried on shouting and swearing. I made a remark intended to be soothing, but the woman was outraged. For several minutes she shouted abuse at me while conducting her business with a mechanically smiling cashier.

Others like her train the teenagers of the future. A woman walks past my door with two little girls whose clothing depicts aggressively sexy pop stars. One child drops a potato chips packet. "Pick it up," I say, "Put it in the bin." The mother turns, hostile: "She doesn't have to if she doesn't want to."

For ten minutes a small boy in the local market blows on a whistle loudly enough to cause pain to those around him. Two women giggle at his naughtiness—they are his mother and aunt.

None of these incidents is remarkable, you say? That is my point: We now accept, as a matter of course, an atmosphere that makes us consider all strangers as enemies.

A great attraction of English life was its attitude of *laissez-faire,* of which the most famous example was the eccentric. All sorts of people were tolerated because all (or nearly all) could be counted on to maintain a reasonable level of civility. But now that consensus is gone.

Many people behave as if they are in a soundproof bubble within which they can be as loud and vile as they choose. All feel free to express their emotions, but the emotions most often heard are anger and contempt.

The result is that England has become a more fearful and formal place. Old ladies cross the road to avoid even ten-year-olds they don't know. Rules spring up —no children, no dogs—to counter the worry that members of the proscribed category might misbehave, and that their guardians, instead of being apologetic, will hotly defend them.

Small children can no longer watch trains from the railway bridge near my home—it now has high walls to prevent slightly older children from amusing themselves by trying to murder the driver. The less homicidal scribble words that, except for the obscenities, are indecipherable on our doors and walls. Not long ago a chunk of wood was gouged out of a park bench—a park employee later found a ten-year-old wandering around with an axe.

People near the bottom of the social ladder may indulge in bad public behavior, but they are not the only ones. The voices braying four-letter words sometimes have accents socially superior to mine. In shops, in restaurants, even in church, middle-class people ignore their children running wild.

The voices braying four-letter words sometimes have accents socially superior to mine.

Once, only the very rich would think themselves more important than the public peace. Now anyone who can pay for a meal or a pair of shoes can do as he likes: We have greatly lowered the threshold of impunity.

What amazes me more than the miscreants' behavior is the reaction—or the lack of it—from everyone else. British people sing about how they never, never, never shall be slaves, but slaves are what they look like, bowing their heads in silence and glancing away. Once they were diffident, now they are supine.

One could, however, say that this passivity is the result of experience. While a protester might not suffer abuse or violence, he can expect to be ignored or met with an insolent denial of reality. "You don't like it?" they say: "Don't listen." Did their child kick your dog? "I didn't see him."

One of the good changes in England is that incompetence is less likely to be considered an important prop of traditional values. But the incompetence that remains is often deliberate

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and venal. A friend found that the plumbers who installed her expensive new bathroom had not included an overflow system. She discovered this when her living room ceiling hit the floor.

At least burglars, unlike rogue workmen, don't tell you—when they take your money and destroy your home—that they have improved your property. But the rise in practitioners in both professions shows how little many of the English think of themselves.

Criminals and petty cheaters, however, are hardly the only ones in this racket, one in which the biggest villains remain unseen. One afternoon two drunks staggered onto the local train and began making obscene and racist remarks to the passengers who retreated into the usual cloud of unknowing. At the next stop I ran to the driver's window and told him about the drunks.

"What do you want me to do about it?" he asked. I spelled it out. He could not, he said, throw them off because that was a job for a guard. There were, he added, no guards on the train or at that station or the next several stations.

Yes, the lower-class drunks were disgusting, and the working-class and middle-class people on the train were craven. But the drunks knew they could do as they wished, and the passengers knew no one would help because the people who now own the railways think guards are a needless expense.

Many aspects of our society—drugs, crime, isolation, poor education, too much emphasis on sex—have been blamed for its deterioration. These are problems, but they are only symptoms of the real cause: the obsession with material things that has transformed England in the past generation. Snobbery based on class has largely withered away, to be replaced by an often more vicious snobbery about money, abetted by fashion.

One can easily purchase, with a house or a handbag, a feeling of superiority that allows one to condescend to those who can't afford such things.

Today's constant reiteration in the media that some over-priced accessory is "essential," something "to die for," cannot help making people feel insecure—especially when consumption is marketed so much more intensely than any morality. Drugs? They are a way of feeling happy simply by making a small purchase.

The worsening behavior of the lower class, and the tolerance of it, can also be seen as aspects of the increased importance we place on money. The middle and upper classes, who sell and buy things the poor are told to despise themselves for not having, allay their guilt by letting the poor express their rage, even if by doing so the poor lose the dignity and self-respect that anyone can have for free.

Surely love and sex are free? Not really. To get them, we are constantly told, we must buy whatever is being advertised. The most unlikely products are given a sexual connotation, not only to imply that they will heighten the buyer's allure but to encourage a sexual type of purchasing, a quick gratification of impulse, followed by restlessness, boredom, and the desire for another quick fix.

Like the drunkard who said that he drank to blot out his shame at his drinking, parents work hard to buy children things to compensate for their spending so much time at work. But these parents are not just working to buy treats. They may have to pay for private education if they don't want their children to be pregnant, beaten up or illiterate. Like the increased crime that makes us feel that poor neighborhoods are unsafe, the schools abandoned to bullies and charlatans mean we have to pay dearly for something that was once cheap or free.

Our libraries are closing because it is assumed that only the poor will want to borrow books; the prosperous can buy their own, and everyone else can buy or steal a computer.

The most frightening aspect of this social scene is what it portends. As the over-forties age and die, the idea of a society of private restraint and communal obligation will go too. As public amenities deteriorate, and as the means of education and entertainment are increasingly purchased for use at home, those who cannot pay will become alienated.

One of the most chilling remarks I ever heard came from a nice, bright ten-year-old who had always gone to private schools. He had never heard of a public library. I explained that it lent books and videos, but one had to pay for the videos. He was puzzled. "Shouldn't they make people pay for the books, too?" he asked.

Indeed, Make Them Pay is the motto of England now. In our ideal consumer state, every citizen is alone, unhappy, insecure, vulnerable to the claim that his or her troubles will be cured by the application of money. The engines of commerce and government drive us towards this goal. In my imagination, I hear them rumble as, in actuality, I hear the patter of car-window glass on the pavement or see the Mercedes streaked with spit. ◆

Rhoda Koenig writes for Vogue, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and the* Mail on Sunday. *This is the first installment in a new* TWQ *feature, "The Rudeness Patrol."*

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Karlyn Bowman's Poll Pourri

BAD REPORT CARD

When Roper Starch Worldwide asked about some things that have made the United States a great nation, the Constitution and the free enterprise system topped the list. Schools didn't fare quite so well. Forty-five percent said public education for all citizens is something that made our nation great, but that response was down considerably from 63 percent who gave it when Roper asked the question a quarter century ago in 1974.

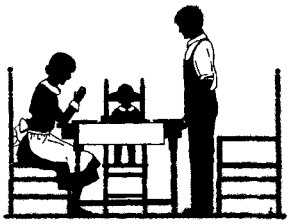
This attitude no doubt explains rising support for voucher systems. In 1970, Gallup and the educational society Phi Delta Kappa introduced the idea of a voucher system this way: "In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child for his or her education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial or private school they choose." Forty-three percent favored the voucher system, 46 percent were opposed. By 1983, 51 percent were in favor, 38 percent opposed. In 1993, Gallup and Phi Delta Kappa asked whether people favored or opposed "allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense." That year, only 24 percent favored the idea. In the 1998 survey, 44 percent did. A second question specified that parents could "send their school-age children to any public, private or church-related school they choose," with government paying "all or part of the tuition." In 1998, a majority favored the idea, and 45 percent opposed it. In these questions as in many others about voucher systems, nonwhites are usually more supportive than whites, perhaps because they have had more negative experiences with public schools.

In Wisconsin, where Milwaukee's decision to allow some low-income parents to choose their child's school has been given considerable media attention, support for a voucher system has risen from 45 percent in 1988 to 61 percent in 1998.

WANTED: PARENTAL GUIDANCE

Pollsters have been investigating the public's perceptions of the reasons for the tragedy in Littleton, Colorado. Not surprisingly, the belief that parents should pay more attention to their children's activities has figured prominently in responses. The results reminded me of an interesting Gallup Youth Survey from 1997 that suggested that teens themselves want firm parental involvement in many areas of their lives. When thirteen-to-seventeen-year-olds were asked whether young people under eighteen should be required to get parental consent on ten different matters, 88 percent said it should be required to purchase a handgun, 81 percent to get a credit card, 79 percent to get married, 78 percent to get an abortion, 72 percent to drive a car, 68 percent to stay out past 11 P.M., 68 percent to smoke, and 66 percent to use birth control devices. A near majority (48 percent) said teens should have to get consent to pierce their ears or other body parts. The one item that didn't garner majority support was dyeing one's hair. Only 35 percent thought parental consent should be required.

THOU SHALT



Ours is a deeply religious country, something public opinion surveys document over and over again. In late June, for example, Gallup asked whether people favored allowing schools to display the Ten Commandments. A large majority, 74 percent, favored the idea, and 24 percent were opposed. An even larger majority (83 percent) favored allowing students to say prayers during graduation ceremonies (17 percent were opposed).

In June, NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal* found 64 percent in favor (40 percent strongly) of "allowing religiously-based instruction on values and morals in public schools." A third were opposed (20 percent strongly). ◆

Karlyn Bowman is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C.

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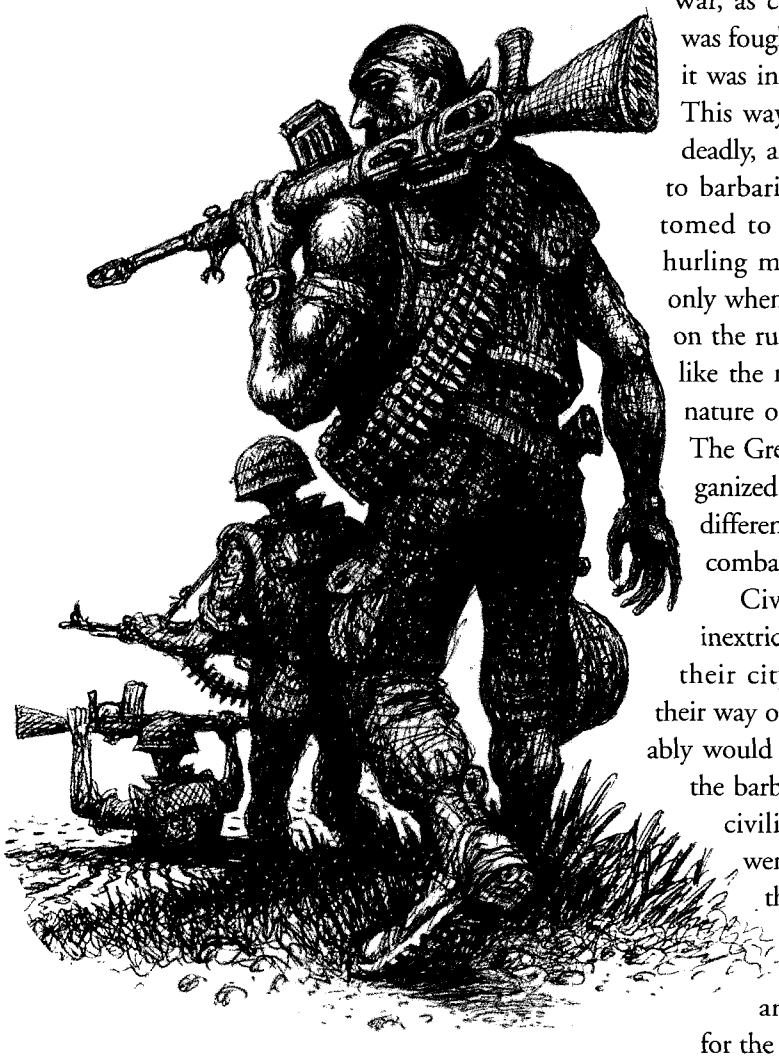
In Search of the Noble Warrior

Anita K. Blair had heard a lot about the Eleven Bravos. She was surprised when she finally met them



War as we know it saved Western civilization in 480 B.C., when the Greeks led by 300 Spartans held off the Persian invasion in the narrow pass at Thermopylae. The Greek warriors stood their ground and invited battle, which lasted for days. Weapons disintegrated, and the defenders fought finally with their hands and teeth. Vastly outnumbered, the Greek soldiers were massacred. They managed, however, to delay the onslaught of the enemy long enough to permit the rest of Greece to rally and ultimately repel the invaders.

According to historians, war was invented by Greek farmers. Before the Greeks invented war, there were centuries of marauding by barbarians. War, as created by the Greeks, was fought to the death because it was intended as a last resort. This way of war—unyielding, deadly, and decisive—was alien to barbarians, who were accustomed to long-distance fights, hurling missiles, and closing in only when a terrified enemy was on the run. The Greeks did not like the random and indecisive nature of barbarian aggression. The Greek way of war was organized conflict: settling their differences once and for all in combat managed by warriors.

Civilization and war are inextricably linked. If not for their city-states, their farms, their way of life, the Greeks probably would have cut and run like the barbarians. But they had a civilization to defend and were willing to do so with their lives. The plausible threat of war is essential for the survival of any civilization. If not for the threat of war, as waged by soldiers and warriors, barbarians would freely maraud, plunder, and destroy civilized communities.

In a world where conflict is inevitable, the opposite of war is not peace, but disorganized conflict—a condition, as we see in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, that is most unhealthy for women, children, and other living things. War is extreme. Those who wage war must be prepared to kill or be killed.

War has changed and so the military must change. That is the argument of those who say that the military must change to adapt itself to increasing numbers of female recruits. It is a dangerous and possibly fatal argument. Certainly, technology has continually transformed the tools of warfare. Archers gave way to musketeers and cavalry to tanks. But the fundamental nature of war and the warriors who must fight have not changed in the nearly three thousand years that have elapsed since Greek soldiers stood obedient unto death at Thermopylae.

Even so, many advocates of an increased female presence in the military argue that, far from hindering effectiveness, accommodating increased numbers of women at every level will actually improve the military. This was an issue before the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues, on which I served. As a result of my work on the commission, I became convinced that the objective for many who advocate a greater female influence in the armed services is not so much to conquer the military as to conquer manhood: They aim to make the most quintessentially masculine of our institutions more feminine.

Believers in the feminization of the military say an approach that favors cooperation over conflict will produce

Drawings by Yuri Kolyadenko

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"win-win" outcomes. This is not a topic of idle speculation: The face of today's military is increasingly feminine. Women now constitute about 15 percent of the armed forces and about 20 to 25 percent of new recruits.

Some aspects of the feminization of the military are merely laughable. Take "cooing"—that stands for the Army's new "Consideration of Others" program. Lt. General Claudia Kennedy, the highest-ranking woman in the Army, is a big fan of "cooing," which is taught in sensitivity sessions led by a "facilitator." The groups are billed—and cooed—in Pentagon-produced public relations news releases as "intimate groups of not more than twenty-five." One such release glowingly recounted how—in a session on sexual harassment—one participant was called down for using the "insensitive" expression "pardon my French." A presumably more considerate member of the group "challenged the phrase as derogatory to French people."

Alas, other facets of the feminization of the military aren't so funny. Military rules for conduct in sexual behavior, for example, cannot be the same as in civilian life. For reasons having to do with cohesion and concentration, the military will crumble if it becomes like the civilian world in sexual mores. Large numbers of women can't help but change the way the fighting machine works.

The physical requirements for recruits have been changed to help the gentler sex keep up with the guys—fine for couch potatoes but not a good idea if these recruits ever end up dodging bullets. Running, for example, is a basic part of basic training. But generally, women can't run as fast as men. Consequently, every branch of the service tries to manipulate standards so that women succeed. At Navy boot camp, recruits run in formation, with the slowest runners determining the pace for everybody else. Nobody fails because they all get there at the same time. In the Air Force, recruits run around a track for thirty minutes, with every individual choosing his own pace. Nobody has to be at the finish line at any particular time.

The Army, perhaps because it is the largest branch of the military, can't guarantee success for everyone. Army recruits run in ability groups: Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, and Echo. The big problem: Women tend to bunch in the two slowest groups. This worries the Army brass. But it infuriates many of the women I talked to over the course of my service on the commission. I found that many regarded as evidence of sexism in the Army any standard other than a minimal pass-fail. "The men hate us," I was told, or, "The men don't know how to treat us."

This was news to me. Even in isolated, off-the-record conversations, military men expressed admiration for their female colleagues. I was puzzled so I began asking, "Tell me specifically what makes you say that men hate you or don't know how to treat you." They gave primarily two answers: Men bark orders (as opposed to asking nicely), and men "don't observe standards." Ironically, upon questioning, I realized that what the women really meant was that there *are* standards—which men routinely exceed and women can't. Several women complained of being humiliated because the class marched too fast for them! "They should not be allowed to push us to do more," one woman sneered bitterly. "They?" I said.

"The Eleven Bravos, ma'am." That was always the reply.

"Eleven Bravo" is the military term for the foot soldiers in the U.S. Army

continued from page 31 argument. The true author should attend to her or his Muse and allow others to clear up the dishes.

This way madness lies. In the same month that *Mslexia* and the Chatwin biography were launched, a man called Michael Leach, whose wife Karoline is a playwright, was alleged to have hatched a plot to murder his ancient mother to ease the financial worries of the family. In Mr. Leach's words, he "bottled it" and let the old girl live, but how much police time, not to mention the risk of a certain atmosphere attending future family gatherings, would have been spared if his wife had not been locked away in the study and had been more involved in domestic tasks?

Surely it is time to accept that the best and most serious modern writers are those who accept their share of the housework. Would John Updike have gained his insights into family life had he not spent time with the Hoover and the Shake 'n' Vac? Would Doris Lessing have achieved her understanding of human nature if she had been a complete stranger to Pledge? Surely one can even imagine the saturnine Philip Roth clattering the plates at sinks, even as he broods grumpily on his next scene of intimate conflict and erotic excess?

There are others—Julian Barnes, Cormac McCarthy, Jeanette Winterson, Gore Vidal—who, one fears, may belong to the Chatwin/*Mslexia* school and refuse point-blank to do the housework. They should reach for the Fairy Liquid before their work begins to suffer.◆

Terence Blacker is a novelist and columnist for the Independent. *This article first appeared in* The Author, *the magazine of the Society of Authors.*

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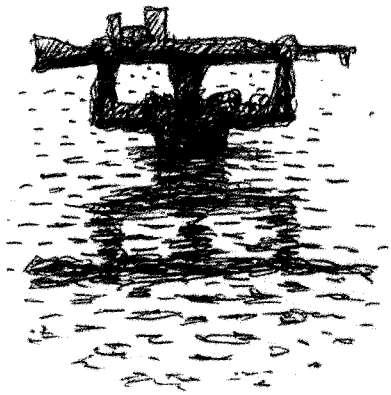
Infantry. The infantry is the last bastion of maleness in the Army—there are no female recruits, and, much to the disgust of many women, it is the Eleven Bravos, the Army's ground combat troops, who frequently become drill sergeants teaching other specialties. "They" make it harder for everybody else because instead of trying merely to meet the Army's standards, "they" try to exceed them. Indeed, the Eleven Bravos can run faster and jump higher. "They" are the soldiers who, if the U.S. ever wages a ground war, may engage in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. In short, these are the grunts. You saw them risk their own lives to save Private Ryan in the movie.

Many in the military (and not just the women) speak of the Eleven Bravos with puzzlement, envy, and even contempt. Were they violent misfits? I already knew that they were trained to fight "up close, personal and brutal." Maybe the Eleven Bravos were like some of the noncombat recruits I'd met at Fort Jackson in South Carolina. When one of them told me, "I joined the Army because I didn't have anything else to do," it was easy to believe. This "soldier" along with quite a few others looked like an extra for the movie *Deliverance.*



They spoke of a willingness to put their lives on the line. A Bravo drill sergeant joked, "There's always got to be some meat-eater with a bayonet pushing the enemy off."

As a member of the commission, I felt it was my duty to meet the animals of Eleven Bravo—up close and personal. To find out why they inspired such opprobrium, I flew to Fort Benning, in Georgia. To observe the Eleven Bravos in action, however, I had to leave the comforts of the post and go deep into the woods. There I watched them do bayonet practice with dummies and crawl on the ground as live bullets whizzed above their heads. Combat training, still all-male, is rough, competitive, and aggressive. The Eleven Bravos were rather like animals, grunting, sweating, disheveled, and muddy in the Georgia pine forest. Infantry trainees at Fort Benning aren't allowed to use knives and forks but must eat everything—including a celebratory steak breakfast when they complete training—using only spoons. But when they sat down to talk to me, they were touchingly humble and grateful to their drillmasters for the discipline they instilled.

In their wet, dirty, musty camouflage, they did look a bit terrifying. But these young men spoke movingly of the honor of being a soldier. They had joined the combat infantry from diverse backgrounds. This one had a graduate degree, while that one had been homeless. "I just didn't have it together. I'm a better person now that I've learned self-control," one man told me. They were being taught how to kill or die. But the young men of Eleven Bravo didn't see their job only in terms of taking life. They were also deeply conscious of carrying out the humanitarian activity now commonly performed by the military. "A soldier isn't just someone who kills," one said. "He's also supposed to be able to take care of people. That's part of what we have to learn here."

"I don't know—I just felt I had to do this," said a young man who previously was a special education teacher. They spoke movingly of the code of a soldier, how he must always control himself and never hurt innocent people. The Eleven Bravos I met demand the best from themselves. Every one of them has to be strong enough and prepared to carry the weight of a wounded buddy to safety. They spoke of a willingness to put their lives on the line. A Bravo drill sergeant joked, "There's always got to be some meat-eater with a bayonet pushing the enemy off."

The motto of the Eleven Bravos is, "This We'll Defend." But who will defend them? Combat soldiers like the boys I met at Fort Benning are the targets of much verbal abuse in today's military. If war has really been abolished, we don't need them to sacrifice their lives for us. But until then, we must stand up for them—decisively, extremely, and unconditionally. ◆

Anita K. Blair is the president of the Independent Women's Forum. She served as chairman of the Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender-Related Issues.

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One last observation . . .

Memo to the Lit Set: Pick Up Your Own Mess

Novelist *Terence Blacker* explains why writers should do the dishes

HAVE YOU DONE the washing up? Or did you leave your dirty dishes on the sideboard in the comfy expectation that, by the time you return from your desk, some civilian, some nonwriter, will have dealt with it? Maybe you have an absolute treasure who relieves you of the problem altogether, allowing you that all-important thinking time that is so important for those of us in the creative industries.

These are not entirely facetious questions. Already this year, the role of washing up in the writer's life has become a leading issue of literary debate. Several reviewers of Nicholas Shakespeare's biography of Bruce Chatwin, for example, have been worried by the fact that, throughout his marriage, the great man was never known to have taken his plate at the end of a meal from the table to the sink, nor to have washed up a single saucer, nor even, in the time-honored way of the hopelessly undomesticated male, to hang around aimlessly with a tea-cloth in his hand. The many people with whom Chatwin liked to stay confirmed that he preferred to hold forth at the table while others busied themselves around his glittering presence.

Not only did they indulge him, but his long-suffering hosts seem to have liked this aspect of his character. While, to a nonwriter, a career marked by social and intellectual snobbery, and self-mythologizing on a heroic scale, might suggest a certain pretentiousness, to Chatwin's famous friends (he didn't go in for friends who were not famous), it all added to his mystique. When, with a group of journalist chums he arrived at a restaurant, found there was one too few seats at their table and briskly sent his wife home, Bruce's pals accepted it as part of his genius.

Perhaps it was. Maybe his allergy to anything as mundane as domestic work was inextricably bound up with his talent as writer. Who knows? Possibly it was true that the merest contact with rubber gloves, the slightest whiff of Spring-Fresh Fairy Liquid would have fatally contaminated his sense of self, his confidence, and, as a result, his writing. And, if that is the case, have the rest of us been making a terrible mistake all these years? Would we have achieved purer, less compromised work had we simply refused, with a quiet, firm dignity, any request to wash up, dry up, make the bed or even put our dirty socks in the washing basket, had we said plainly and simply, "No, sorry, can't do that—you see, I'm a writer."

There will be those who will argue that it is words on the page, not dutiful behavior and good citizenship, that are important and, under normal circumstances, I would agree with them. Why should the fact that Philip Larkin was a plonking racist influence our reading of his poetry any more than the suspicion that, by the heartfelt accounts of former wives and partners, Philip Roth is a touch ungenerous with women put us off his novels?

But there is something peculiarly self-indulgent about Chatwin and his easy assumption that, just as real men don't eat quiche, real authors don't do the washing up. In a similar way, my admiration for Martin Amis' novels was badly shaken some years ago by his confession—boast, really—that he simply could not deal with money matters, that anything in the form of a brown envelope or a bank statement or a letter from an accountant he would queasily hand over to his wife. It occurred to me that, if the man was unable to deal with a letter about his finances (and, boy, what a problem they must be), why should the rest of us take seriously his views on Chaos Theory, women, black holes, or the end of the world?

A complication to the great washing-up debate has been added by *Mslexia*, the new magazine for women writers. Apparently, a gender issue is involved. Addressing the reason why twice as many women read English at university and attend creative writing courses but often fail to get published, *Mslexia*'s editor Debbie Taylor put the blame squarely on housework and childcare. "It is no coincidence that many prominent women authors are either childless or lesbian or both."

It's a tragic enough picture—potentially brilliant female authors either trapped in the kitchen and the nursery or forced into lesbianism in order to fulfill their writerly destiny—but behind it is the Bruce Chatwin *continued on page 29*

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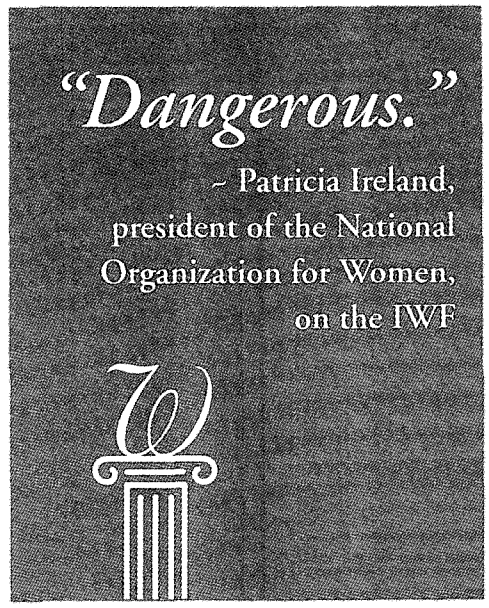
FOR THE PAST six years, the Independent Women's Forum has been taking on the old establishment of feminist organizations—and winning. "The IWF has a profile almost unheard of for a group that is the new kid on the block," writes the *Boston Globe*. "In the marketplace of ideas, from the national news media all the way down to local radio, the IWF has shown its real strength....[The] IWF is well on its way to becoming the foremost media nemesis of the feminist movement."



Why has the IWF been so successful? Because the women who make up the IWF are not radical ideologues—they're businesswomen, economists, lawyers, truck drivers, and also mothers. Because the IWF promotes individual responsibility, strong families, limited government, and opportunity—policies that help *all* Americans. Because the IWF, a nonpartisan, nonprofit Washington organization, sponsors speaker events and conferences noted for their provocative and free-ranging debates. And because the IWF publishes *The Women's Quarterly*—an intellectual antidote to *Ms.*—which syndicated columnist Mona Charen praises as, "My type of women's magazine! With humor and sarcasm but also with warmth and passion, these women offer an intelligent refutation of the leading feminist nonsense that is swallowed so uncritically by the mainstream press."

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